

JUDAISM

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ZALMAN SHAZAR—THE MAN AND THE WRITER

Avraham Kariv

KARL MARX AND THE JEWS

APR 24 1974

Lawrence S. Stepelevich

MAN IN A TECHNOLOGICAL AGE

Samuel E. Karff

WOMEN IN THE MINYAN

Phillip Sigal

RE-APPRAISING MAIMONIDES

H. Joel Laks

ISSUE No. 90 / VOLUME 23 / NUMBER 2 / \$2.25

SPRING 1974

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS

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JUDAISM, conceived as a free and non-partisan organ, is dedicated to the creative discussion and exposition of the religious, moral and philosophical concepts of Judaism and their relevance to the problems of modern society. Through an exploration of the meaning and needs of the Jewish experience, it hopes to widen the channels of communication between Jews and to affirm Jewish verity and vitality to the world at large.

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American Jewish Congress

JUDAISM: A QUARTERLY JOURNAL is published by the American Jewish Congress. It appears in January, April, July, and October. Office of Publication: 15 East 84th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028. Re-entered as second-class matter at Post Office, New York City, N.Y. Subscription in the United States and Canada, \$8.00 for one year, \$14.00 for two years, \$19.00 for three years; foreign subscription, \$9.00. Special rate for bulk (10 or more) and student subscriptions, \$5.00. Single issue, \$2.25; single issue abroad, \$2.50. Make checks payable to the order of **JUDAISM**, and send to: 15 East 84th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028. A month's notice must be given of any change of address.

US ISSN 0022-5762

The Board of Editors invites articles, communications, comments and discussion for publication. Address: Editors, **JUDAISM**, 15 East 84th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028. Copyright © 1974 by the American Jewish Congress.

JUDAISM

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In increasing measure, modern men are turning again to the quest for a world-view on the issues that are timeless—the meaning of life, the challenge of death, the purpose of suffering, the significance of the individual, his relation to society, and the goal of history. In order to advance this enterprise of spiritual discovery of our time this Journal has been projected. It will be primarily concerned with the philosophy, ethics, and religion of Judaism as a factor in the contemporary world . . .

We are committed to the proposition that Judaism has positive value today for Jews and for the world . . . At the same time, we disassociate ourselves from the dangerous tendency toward the hardening of party lines on the contemporary Jewish scene . . . The members of the Board of Editors belong to every school of Jewish life or to none. The trends popularly referred to as Orthodox, Conservatism, Reform, Reconstructionism, as well as others that as yet have no specific names, have their advocates among us, though no institution or movement is officially represented . . . Undoubtedly, our differences will find expression in these pages, but we shall be at one in opposing the dogmatism which takes for granted that one's own particular standpoint has a monopoly on truth and the authoritarianism which would suppress any contrary point of view.

Judaism will be dedicated to the quest for truth in the spirit of freedom. Our columns will be open to anyone who has something significant to say and the ability to say it well. New and unconventional interpretations, whatever their standpoint, will be welcomed from every source, for we share the conviction of the Talmud that "Both these and the others are the words of the living God."—From the introductory article by Robert Gordis, "Toward a Renaissance of Judaism" in Vol. I, No. 1.

The First Reader

IF ONE WERE TO SEEK EVIDENCE OF THE UNIQUENESS of Israel, one of the most striking proofs might well be the quality of the men chosen to serve as Presidents of the State of Israel. Unlike the all-but-universal practice elsewhere, they have not been superannuated politicians, but men of the spirit, distinguished in science and thought, leaders by virtue of their idealism and insight. This tradition—initiated with Chaim Weizmann, the first President of Israel, and maintained by the present incumbent, Ephraim Katzir—has been strikingly exemplified in the career of Zalman Shazar, now fortunately enjoying a much deserved period of leisure in his retirement from the cares and responsibilities of office.

His impressive literary output is discussed by the distinguished Israeli critic, *Avraham Kariv*, in the paper, “Zalman Shazar—The Man and The Writer.”

Kariv has been one of the most controversial figures on the Israeli literary scene, by virtue of his uncompromising insistence that traditional values are indispensable for the new Hebrew culture. From this vantage point, he has not hesitated to criticize many of the giants of the modern Hebrew Renaissance.

In the present paper, Kariv highlights the strong bond in Shazar's life and thought between the traditional values of the *shtetl* in the Diaspora and the burgeoning new civilization in the land of Israel. He pays warm tribute to the genial qualities of insight and sympathy which have marked Zalman Shazar as a leader, a thinker, and a human being.

The authenticity of Kariv's portrait may be gauged from the fact that President Shazar modestly indicated his pleasure at the prospect that this paper would appear in English and, thus, reach a larger audience than the original Hebrew text. The excellent translation was prepared by Rabbi Gershon Levi.

In recent years, liberal Jews have been increasingly disconcerted to discover deep strains of anti-Semitism in radical circles ostensibly dedicated to the establishment of a world order based upon justice and freedom. Actually, the presence of anti-Jewish prejudice among radicals, including socialists and communists, is no new phenomenon. In his paper, “Marx and the Jews,” *Lawrence S. Stepelevich* documents the history of Marxist attitudes toward Jews and Judaism and demonstrates the deeply rooted prejudices that Marx had against the people from whom he sprang.

"You're holding up the wheels of progress," is an American cliché that is less heard today than in the past. Until recently, virtually no one questioned that "progress" demanded the levelling of the countryside, the eradication of communities, the blotting out of sunlight and air, and the overcrowding of central cities. All this was demanded in the name of "progress," a popular euphemism for "profits." The term "ecology" may now have become a shibboleth, in turn, but it represents a new, valid, and serious concern with the world in which men must live. Today, it is widely questioned whether technological progress is an automatic and irresistible force that dare not be interfered with, no matter what the cost.

In his paper, "Man's Power and Limits in a Technological Age," *Samuel E. Karff* maintains that the time is overdue for contemporary man to place conscious limits upon the changes being introduced into society. He suggests that religion may help to establish the criteria of judgment.

Recently, the Committee on Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly ruled that women may be counted to the minyan, the quorum of ten required for public prayer. The decision evoked controversy, not only outside the ranks of Conservative Judaism, but within the movement itself. In his trenchant paper, "Women in A Prayer Quorum," *Phillip Sigal* presents the background for the Rabbinical Assembly decision and the grounds upon which it is based. If the paper does not succeed in dissipating the heat, it should at least increase the light shed on this question.

The upsurge of interest in mysticism and related phenomena has been accompanied by a corresponding decrease of concern with the great rational philosophers produced by medieval Judaism, notably Saadia and Maimonides. That this has led to an intellectual impoverishment of contemporary Jewish thought can hardly be denied.

A fresh approach to the greatest of medieval Jewish thinkers is presented by *H. Joel Laks* in his paper, "Re-appraising Maimonides." He sees in Maimonides, not merely an intermediary between Jewish tradition and Aristotelian philosophy, as is conventionally assumed, but a genuinely creative and original thinker of the first magnitude, whose ideas, when comprehended in depth, are relevant to the perennial issues even today.

In his paper, "The Jewish Revolution Is Not Complete," *Norman Levine* maintains that the establishment of the State of Israel has radically transformed the character of Jewish life outside its borders. Indeed, he maintains, the term "diaspora" cannot be properly applied to Jewish

communities after 1948; at the very least, the term would require drastic reinterpretation, in view of the fundamental change in the political realities. He analyzes the position of various *mehayyevei hagolah*, "yea sayers of the diaspora," notably Dubnow, Ahad Ha-Am, and Buber, from this critical perspective.

The lively cultural scene in Israel has recently been enriched by the appearance of a new literary journal, *Siman Kria*. In his paper, "Exclamations, Manifestoes, and Other Literary Peripheries," *Warren Bargad* places the journal in perspective by relating it to the various literary tendencies which have appeared in Israel during the recent past, and evaluates the trends for the future in Hebrew literature.

The rediscovery of values in Judaism is not limited to the area of ideas. The genius of the Jewish tradition has always been its capacity to embody in ritual its insights and ideals. Few elements of Jewish ritual are more widely observed in one form or another today than the rites of mourning.

Joel Wolowelsky, in his paper "A Midrash on Jewish Mourning," suggests that the practices associated with the week of mourning afford the community a double opportunity—to participate in the sense of loss occasioned by the death and to bring the mourner a measure of comfort by underscoring the fact that the community, itself, triumphs over death by maintaining its continuity.

A poet is not a prophet, but both have been touched by a coal from the altar of God. It is fifty years since I. J. Schwartz completed his volume of Yiddish poems called *Kentucky*. Written almost two generations before our day, it reveals many of the insights at which we have only recently arrived. It pictures the dreams, the struggles, and the disillusionment suffered by the Jewish immigrant to America, as well as his boundless love for this great new land.

Schwartz describes the cleavage between German Jews and their East European "co-religionists." Long before the days of "black liberation," the poet penetrates to the soul of the negro in the South, his unconquerable vitality, his abject poverty, his degradation at the hands of the whites. *Kentucky* even foreshadows the process in American life now described as "Hansen's Law," which I may summarize as follows: "What the grandparents knew and the children strove to forget, the grandchildren wish to recall."

Gertrude W. Dubrovsky presents an appreciative study of I. J.

Schwartz's poem, which she characterizes as "The Americanization of 'The Grandchildren of Wander.'" "

The first Hebrew work published in America was a grammar prepared by Judah Monis, Professor of Hebrew at Harvard College, who was a convert to Christianity. Very little is known about this pioneer of Judaic Studies in American universities. *Arthur A. Chiel* presents a portrait of this unique personality of colonial America, including data not previously known, in "Judah Monis, The Harvard Convert."

Whatever virtues JUDAISM may possess, it does not qualify as a journal of politics. Nevertheless—or perhaps all the more so on this account—we take pride in noting that two of our contributors have been elected to political office in the United States and in Israel.

The Honorable Abraham D. Beame was overwhelmingly chosen to be Mayor of New York City last November. He is the first Jewish incumbent of this high office. His Honor, who was then Controller of the City of New York, contributed a very thoughtful paper to the Winter 1972 issue of JUDAISM on the theme "A Call for Reasoned Liberalism."

In the elections held in Israel on December 31, 1973, Shulamit Aloni won a surprising upset victory and was elected a member of the Knesset. She is the author of "The Status of The Woman in Israel," which appeared in the Spring 1973 Israel Anniversary Issue of JUDAISM.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to them both and wish for them, for all Israel and for all mankind *shalom rav*.

R. G.

Zalman Shazar— The Man and The Writer

AVRAHAM KARIV *

Translated by Gershon Levi

A SINGLE THREAD RUNS THROUGH THE MANY-SIDED literary output of the Third President of Israel. In the public career of Zalman Shazar as in his private personality, in his writings as in his numerous unpublished addresses, one theme predominates—the thrust towards Jewish rebirth, together with its attendant problems. Now explicit, as in his essays on contemporary issues and personalities; now implied, as in his historical studies and memoirs, this thread ties everything about Shazar into an integral whole.

It is all the more striking, therefore, that so much of what this “seeker after Zion” has written should be concerned with the *galut* past of the Jewish people, whether it be the immediate past of the East-European *shtetl*, where his own roots lay, or a more remote past in the centuries of Jewish wandering and homelessness. What is even more remarkable is that Shazar’s handling of those times and places should be not only sympathetic, but actually suffused with tenderness and love.

Take his relationship to the Russian townlet of his childhood. According to the accepted view of his contemporaries, he ought to have rebelled against the *shtetl* and everything it stood for. Instead of which he writes:

I spent eleven years of my life—no more—in Steibitz. . . . But those eleven years were the dawn of my youth, and the time of my *heder* studies. What I absorbed then was sealed in my spirit by the fire of love, and the inspiration of those first days has been with me ever since.¹

Such ideas are the complete antithesis of the received doctrine that has come down to us from those who despise the *shtetl*. Not only does Shazar fail to discard the spiritual baggage of the *shtetl*, to regard it as an unhealthy impediment or at best a useless dead-weight. No, he goes so far as to think of it lovingly as a precious treasure, a source of on-going inspiration. Even his Zionism, it would seem, draws élan from that source!

How strange all this would have sounded to the pioneers of the Second Aliyah—one of whom was none other than Shazar himself!

There is that in Shazar’s memoirs which is common to all who shared

1. Zalman Shazar, *Morning Stars*. Translated by Shulamith Schwartz Nardi. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1967), p. 3. From the Hebrew original *Kokhvei Boker* (Tel Aviv: *Am Oved*, 1950).

*From the Hebrew *Ziyon Me-Ahavah*, in the April 1973 issue of *MOLAD*.

in the *shtetl* experience. The passage quoted above recalls his *heder* years. In the same vein is the following tribute to his teachers of those childhood years:

I wish it were possible to put on paper even a partial appreciation of those wonderful men in my town who bore the responsibility for passing Torah on from one generation to the next. We shall not see their like again. May these lines be a modest expression of my gratitude and respect. Their lives were harried and their burdens were many, yet they managed to give me and the likes of me our first glimpses into those treasures of the spirit to which we, as Jewish children, were rightful heirs.²

The teachers he is talking about were no different from any other teachers in the average little Jewish community of those days. Shazar describes them as they were, without touching up their portraits one way or the other. What emerges is a warm tribute to a whole class of poor, half-starved *melamdim*, to whom the Jewish people owes so much, and to whom most of our literature has been so unkind.

There is another class of *shtetl* folk whom Shazar rescues from the denigration made trite by repetition. With faithful realism he depicts the hard-working laborers of his town, as they toiled through the long day down by the river at their craft of boat-making,

tossed by rain and storm and wind. . . . Often after reading conventional discussions of Jewish "parisitism" in the Diaspora, I have found myself wanting to beg the pardon of these long-gone workers of Steibitz whom I knew in my youth. I remember them patching holes in the sides of boats with rope and fiber; lying on their backs on the ground under larger boats, with huge wooden hammers and long iron files in their hands, closing up cracks from the morning to late hours of the night; hammering away and singing while the breezes blew from the turbulent river.³

Another element in Shazar's memoirs that deserves our attention is the intimate picture he gives us of the home in which he grew up. His father was no reclusive student, but rather a man of affairs, a lumber merchant. However, it would probably be more correct to say that his principal vocation was not that of lumber merchant, but rather that of hasid. He belonged to the Habad variety, the brand of intellectual mysticism whose principal centers were in Lithuania and Bielorrussia. Quite obviously, the pride of place in such a Jewish home belonged to the book-case. Small wonder, then, that Shazar should have devoted a whole chapter of his memoirs to "Father's Library," in which he remembers the titles of the books, their arrangement on the shelves, the uses to which they were put on stated days and occasions. And in the very manner of his telling he puts to rest that canard, according to which the life processes in the Jewish home were stifled by the musty books. On the contrary, he shows the volumes in his father's book-case nourishing and enlivening the yearly round. Even if we had no other

2. *Kokhvei Boker*, p. 48.

3. *Morning Stars*, p. 6.

source of information, this chapter about one single Jewish home would suffice to flesh out for us the concept "people of the book."

But it would be a mistake to think that life in that particular home revolved around bookish pursuits. The real pulse of the household was its underlying affect, its constant openness to ḥasidic rapture; and of this a principal expression was the *niggun*. The family repertoire of these melodies was constantly being replenished; every journey to the Rebbe produced some new song. In sum, what counted in that home was the life-style, and its moments of ecstasy touched the very depths of being.

Picture our lumber merchant, one of the most respected men of the town, dancing backwards down the main street on the eve of Shemini Aẓeret, making his way to the *shtiebel* for *hakafot*, a bottle of cognac in each of his upraised hands, singing and dancing all the way, joined by an ever swelling crowd of ḥasidim right up to the synagogue. This prelude is followed by the Torah procession in the little prayer-house, the ḥasidim dancing round and round to exhaustion. But the climax is yet to come:

The whole congregation has danced itself out and scattered to the four winds, but father is still in the little synagogue, all by himself in a state of ecstasy with which drink has nothing to do, dancing alone, just he and his intoxicated heart.⁴

A different kind of ecstasy, contemplative rather than celebratory, was observed by Shazar in a Ḥabad ḥasid of even deeper dimensions—his grandfather. By contrast to his father's house, where the windows were somewhat ajar to the newer winds of thought and action, and Zionism was at least an available option, grandfather's home was barricaded against such alien notions. The old man could not bear to think that his grandson was associating with rank outsiders. So the two of them were at ideological odds—yet the ties of their mutual affection were as strong as ever. Shazar emphasizes that with every visit to his grandfather, who lived in a nearby town, his love for the old man increased. We, on our part, may add that the ability to differ without rancour has remained a characteristic of the grandson through all the years.

In the chapter entitled "Grandfather's Parting Gift"⁵ Shazar describes the old man, left lonely by the death of most of his contemporaries, "like a solitary cliff on the shore of a lake that has dried up." Even his beloved grandson has been seduced by the new ways, which must have seemed downright heresy to the old man. The world he had known was crumbling before his very eyes. And now his Zionist grandson is leaving for Palestine, and has come to say good-bye.

Such an encounter was bound to be crucial, pregnant with possi-

4. *Kokhvei Boker*, p. 106.

5. *Morning Stars*, p. 197 ff.

bilities of clash, its emotional consequences unforeseeable. Yet, in the event, great love won the day, and that last visit was transmuted into a memorable moment of tenderness, expressed in a language more eloquent than speech. Those Jews were not emotionally inarticulate. They had at their disposal a medium of communication capable of expressing both the peaks of the psyche and its depths—the language of the *niggun*. It was a language in which the grandfather was fluent. And on that last Friday evening he stood before the now shrunken minyan of his fellow ḥasidim, leading them in the prayers that welcome the Sabbath.

Listening to Grandfather chant, I heard beneath the words his deep lament over the cruel loneliness of his old age and the inexorable decline of the precious world that had been his. I heard his grief over the differences dividing kinsmen and at the same time his proud devotion to the immutable glory. I heard his passionate gratitude for the great bliss he felt in nearness to the source of all blessing; in the eternity of Israel unimpaired from generation to generation; and in the bond—at last—between my soul and his.⁶

Is there really such a great distance between the man who prayed that prayer, “all aspiration to the heavens,” and the one who listened to it, and who tells us now that it was “a gift to last all my years”?

Still another gift has stood the test of time. At the very moment of leave-taking the grandfather revealed to his grandson something to help him through life—the secret of the melody, the mystery of the *niggun*. Keep in mind the fact that for those Jews there was a concept of “soul-root.” Every person has his own. Some things are in harmony with the root of his soul, while other things are not. And this applies to tunes as well. There is a way to put it to the test. If you can’t remember a tune, try as you will—then it doesn’t belong to your soul-root. And if it keeps pushing itself into your consciousness unbidden, it doesn’t belong to your soul-root either. Now, the Ḥabad ḥasidim have a tradition that the *niggun* of the *alter Rebbe* always belongs to the soul-root of a genuine Ḥabadnik, in no matter what generation. Consequently, he does not test the *niggun*; it is the *niggun* that puts him to the test. If the melody escapes him, it is a sign that he has somehow gone astray. If he can call it up at will, he can be reassured that he is in good spiritual shape. And now, after all these years, the grandson reveals that, in times of inner perplexity, he still tests himself with the *niggun* of the *rebbe*, just as grandfather had instructed him.

It would appear that there is some continuity, in essence if not in form, between the *niggun* of the *alter Rebbe*, and the prayer of the grandfather, and the dancing of the father—and the Third President of the State of Israel!

What was true of Steibtz was true of every other Jewish *shtetl*. They were all capable of imbuing their children with values to last a

6. Ibid., p. 204.

lifetime. That is why Shazar, whenever he generalizes about these now-vanished communities, speaks, not in terms of decay, but, rather, in terms of fountains and well-springs, as when he writes: "Those were the wells at whose brink we knelt, all of us, and drank our fill."⁷

The author's ultimate hymn of praise to the milieu of his early years is to be found in his long essay on Weizmann. About the formative influences in the life of Israel's first President, he writes:

The primary ones were purely home-grown, planted and nurtured in the little communities around Pinsk and Motele and the towns of Polesie and Lithuania. It was there that the developing young man absorbed the wisdom of his folk, its heritage, its hopes, its longings. . . . Long afterwards, when he had wandered far from the town of his origins, from its life-style and from many of its concepts, the aura of the *shtetl* still surrounded him, lending an air of grace and authenticity to his public presence as well as to his private bearing.⁸

About words like these there are two observations to be made. One is, that our literature knows no warmer panegyric to the *shtetl*. The other is, that in terms of classical Zionist conceptions, such ideas are downright heresy.

Yes, there *is* rebellion in the writings of Shazar; but it is rebellion against that rebellion on which Zionism was based, especially *halutzic* Zionism. No, he did not turn his back on the old habitations of his people, for he was able to discern the radiance that emanated from them. His Zionist convictions were not thereby diminished. Quite the contrary, they were made broader and deeper.

The *shtetl*, in its most authentic form, nurtured the Jewish heritage intensively, at the same time adding a few contributions of its own. Its influences on our author are patent, setting him apart from all that in modern Hebrew literature which is sharply critical of Jewish tradition, and separating him, therefore, from certain tendencies in Zionism. Shazar's work is saturated with the genuine Jewish pathos. In him, the essential nature of the Jewish tradition does not have to be transmuted, by contradistinction to what happens in, say, the work of Ahad Ha-Am. In Shazar's conception of Jewish peoplehood, the Jewish religion occupies its due place, and the role of the Land of Israel is intertwined with it.

It was here that Israel wrestled with his God, and his God with him. Here the Hebrew religion was revealed, that religion whose effulgence was to illumine the people in all its generations, and to influence the cultures and religions of all of humanity, bearing within it as it does the seeds of eternity.⁹

In another context he writes:

The (Nazi) enemy has destroyed the vast majority of those who carried

7. *Ziyon va-Zedek* (Tel Aviv: *Tarbut ve-Hinukh*, 1971), p. 238.

8. *Or Ishim* (Jerusalem: *Ha-Sifriah ha-Zionit*, 1973), vol. I, p. 58.

9. *Orei Dorot* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1971), p. 399.

the Jewish heritage. One after another the centers of Torah have been uprooted, those centers where the age-old literature of the Jewish people still lived and bore fruit. But the heritage itself is beyond the reach of man. There is that about it which is indestructible.¹⁰

None of this implies a static, petrified tradition. "The heritage of Israel is not a stagnant pond. It is a living, surging sea. Each generation represents an added wave."

There is, of course, a line to be drawn in Jewish history, separating the modern return to the homeland from the long centuries of homelessness that went before. For some time now it has been fashionable to pin a deprecatory label on the Jews, singly and collectively, who lived during those centuries. It is a badge more yellow than the yellow badge: *galuti*—"of the exile." The thrust, therefore, has been to leap the centuries, so to speak, and to tie up directly with the Israel of ancient times.

Per contra, the Zionist poet-historian Zalman Shazar feels deeply drawn to the *galut* period, of which his own East European Jewry was a part. He voiced that feeling in his earliest Hebrew article, in which he described the surge of emotion that rose to his consciousness when first he stood before the Western Wall. "When you stand in front of the Wall, you realize how inextricably you have been woven into an eternal fabric, already two thousand years old."¹¹ The mutual interweaving of a millennial history and an individual personality has remained a constant quality of the man who wrote those words.

Keenly aware as Shazar has always been of all the tensions to which present-day life is heir, he has at the same time been fully open to the pulse of past generations, as though the past were still alive. A phrase of his expresses it: "The heritage of a yesterday not-yet-past." Many an inspired essay in his volume, *Orei Dorot*, gives the reader a sense of living contact with the very soul of ages gone by.

The generations that have been are in no way condescended to by the author of *Orei Dorot*—no, not in their capacities, nor in their vitality, nor in their creativity. More, he sees them as predecessors of ours who were repeatedly tried and tested, and whose experiences we ought always to keep in mind. Above all, it was they who guarded and kept alive the flame of hope, the yearning for redemption.

Shazar's sensitive ear detects that yearning from a distance, and across the years. On the surface it would appear that what Hasidism was looking for was emotional exaltation and individual religious experience, and that it expressed this search through melodies of *d'vekus*. But a man thoroughly familiar with these melodies offers us a different interpretation. In his magnificent essay, "Hasidic Longing For The Holy

10. *Ibid.*, p. 396.

11. *Ziyon va-Zedek*, p. 256.

Land," Shazar makes the following points: the collapse of the Sab-bataianic movement left all messianism in bad odor; Ḥasidism, arising soon thereafter, consequently, had to suppress its messianic yearning. Pushed back deep into the subconscious, the unavowed emotion sought an outlet, and burst forth in the form of the melody-without-words, which is to say—the *niggun*.

Shazar's Zionism is simply expressed: the return to Zion was an age-old idea whose time had come. Most of the schools of Zionist thought based themselves on profundities of social and economic theory; but he had no need for them. Those others were all ideology, on the basis of which programs of action were to be drawn up; for him, the dominant element was emotional commitment, which fueled his course of action. For the ideologists, the past was a closed book. For the committed, the past was a source of inspiration.

Shazar never treated the Jewish past as a counterfoil to his Zionism, but, rather, as the motive force which was to carry Zionism into the future. Throughout his pages we find him urging us to study our more recent history, to learn from it, to be warned by its experiences, to be enriched by its creative accomplishments.

Of him who was destined to become Israel's First President, he writes: "The task before Weizmann and his contemporaries was not to create *ex nihilo*, but to reinvigorate an already existing people, taking care that it should inherit the vital juices of all that had gone before."¹² Weizmann, himself, would probably have defined his role in similar terms. Not so the major writers of the Hebrew rebirth, nor the chief actors on the Zionist scene. The prevailing view was that returning Jewry was leaving behind itself nothing but a desert. How fortunate, then, that in the very midst of those who thought so, there should have arisen a man of different spirit. Not that he engaged in polemics on this subject. He functioned, instead, like one of those warm currents in the ocean, bringing blessing to every shore that it washes. In the same way, the warm Jewish spirit of Shazar breathed on all those diaspora communities that he visited, bringing fresh tidings of the Jewish reawakening wherever he went.

His biographical essays about his contemporaries are marked by a special quality of genial affection. What distinguishes his writing in this genre most especially is his gift for human understanding, his insight into the individual personality.

In two volumes called *Or Ishim*, as well as elsewhere in his writings, he deals with a highly variegated assemblage: theorists and trail-blazers, leaders and disciples, men of thought and men of action—a group widely differing in character, in stature, in field of activity; some of whom

12. *Or Ishim*, I, pp. 60–61.

filled the stage with their presence and left an indelible mark behind, while others are so little known that they have to be discovered; some still basking in the full light of history, others half-forgotten or altogether lapsed into obscurity. For the great among them he always manages to find the winged word; for every single one of them he has warm understanding. When he is in his stride, describing one of the giants of his era, he gives his subject the fullest treatment, not neglecting background and origins, influence on others—everything that made the man integral to a picture of his generation.

And this is an author who knows his generation inside out. He knows the fine points that the historians often miss. He reveals, for example, the role played in early Zionism by the awakening of the aesthetic sense, and of the appreciation for talent. "The very appearance of some new talent in our midst was a sort of proof that the springtime of our renaissance was upon us." Or this:

How the poems of Frug fell on our ears like seeds on a field already ploughed! How we welcomed an anthology of lovely folk-songs, how we devoured the pictorial art of Lilien and Schatz and Israels, how eagerly we pounced on an ornament with a Hebrew theme, or listened to some authentic song. And how receptive we were to the poetry of Bialik!

The charismatic image of Theodor Herzl, he tells us, appealed strongly to these new aesthetic sensibilities.

The whole Herzl legend, created during his lifetime and immediately after his death, was carried from one end of the Jewish world to the other on the wings of the newly awakened desire for beauty in Jewish terms. That beard of his! Those gestures, that regal bearing, the parliamentary brilliance we beheld at Basle—all these combined to meet our need for style and form, and to make us feel that, in truth, "the time of singing is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard."¹³

Apparently the Zionism of that generation was more than a call to action; it was also a kind of cultural-artistic rejuvenation. In that context, the grandeur of Herzl's appearance was perceived as a foretaste of the hoped-for splendor.

Shazar also helps us understand the role of the spoken word in the history of Zionism. In an essay on Hayyim Greenberg he writes:

An art-form eagerly sought after in those days was the first-rate Zionist address. Of course, it had to be artistically constructed and skillfully delivered; to embrace both universal concerns and Jewish needs, harmonizing the two; to be lucid in thought and pleasing in form. From the rostrum of the lecturer, as he moved from one city to another, from one meeting to the next, one could hear the best thinking of the movement. In the discussions that took place around these platforms concepts were clarified, alliances were formed, sides were taken. Much that was spoken there later found its way into print in the monthlies of the movement and in its other publications.¹⁴

13. From the essay on Jabotinsky in *Or Ishim*, I, pp. 85–86.

14. *Or Ishim*, II, p. 91.

This is historically interesting, showing as it does that much of the literature of that generation is really a precipitate of the "oral Torah" first presented from the speaker's rostrum.

We learn of another breeding-ground of ideas from the article on Weizmann.

In those years, around the time of the first Russian Revolution (1905), the student colonies at various European universities were a sort of idea-foundry for the bright young Jewish intellectuals who had winged their way out of the confines of the Pale of Settlement in search of the sun of enlightenment. The interminable discussions that took place in these centers were a primary crucible in which were tested those ideas that would ultimately capture the imagination and the allegiance of the youth of that generation. It was there that the young lions of the Jewish national revolution debated fiercely with the fledgeling leaders of the universal social revolution. The echoes of those debates resounded back home in the *shtetlakh*, and developed into the conflicting ideologies that wrestled with one another in Jewish life at the beginning of our century.¹⁵

The foregoing is an example of how Shazar can include on one and the same canvas the portrait of an individual and the lineaments of an era.

The clash of ideologies at that time revolved around propositions that were still only in the realm of advocacy. By the time our author wrote his essays, the passions had issued in actions. For this reason, no doubt, he finds it hardly necessary to concern himself with the substance of those fiery debates. Polemics he eschews altogether, keeping his sights on the constructive contribution of each person, avoiding all slogans, hoisting no battle-flags. He is interested, as the title of his book indicates, in the "light" that emanates from each of these individuals. Indeed, as they meet one another in his pages, these personalities enhance one another, divergent though they be in thought and action; for in this context the encounter is one of light with light.

Many of the personalities Shazar writes about were men with whom he worked, so that, inevitably, much that he has to tell is intertwined with the story of his own life. But he scrupulously avoids obtruding himself into the picture. Where it becomes unavoidable, he modestly refers to himself in the third person. Here is a sample, from his essay on Weizmann:

Once, in the last year of his life, he sat wrapped in a blanket talking in a scarcely audible voice to a younger man about the political perils facing our people. It was a time when the danger of nuclear war had first begun to loom. Weizmann spoke of the long-term projects he still had in mind, still hoped to undertake. . . .¹⁶

The reader might scarcely suspect that the "younger man" to whom the

15. *Or Ishim*, I, p. 59.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

First President of Israel is talking is none other than the man who would one day occupy the same office as the country's Third President.

Nevertheless, many of the qualities ascribed in these essays to the biographees are unintentionally descriptive of the biographer himself. Take what he writes about Nahum Sokolow:

People said that he knew everything. Be that as it may, there *was* one branch of knowledge of which he was a consummate master—he knew Jews; knew them in all their varieties, knew them in their own milieu and in strange surroundings, knew them in their authentic form and in their assimilated guise.¹⁷

And further about Sokolow:

He was, in truth, a man of prodigious learning, but what I valued most was his knowledge of the Jewish People, especially in our day and age when centrifugal forces tug continually at this sundered people, and the roots of Jewish self-awareness are constantly being eaten away, and the study of contemporary Jewry is on the wane.¹⁸

The years have passed; and now a leading figure in the study of contemporary Jewry is the very man who so admired Nahum Sokolow for his knowledge of the subject.

Of all those depicted in *Or Ishim*, the one who most resembles the author is Hayyim Greenberg. Their views and opinions are very much alike, in both cases rooted not so much in abstract ideologies as in qualities of person.

His nobility of character (writes Shazar), enabled Greenberg to rise above the conflicts of his generation. Who among us does not remember the bitter dispute that divided our movement—the one between Hebrew and Yiddish? Who among us was a stronger advocate of Hebrew, a more cogent exponent of the reasons why? Yet, who among us could rival him in his mastery of Yiddish style, or in the authorship of so many thoughtful and beautiful essays in the Yiddish language?

It is hardly necessary to add that Shazar, himself, whose Hebraism is beyond reproach, has always treated both languages with respect, and contributed to the literatures of both.

What Shazar says about an even more important and complicated antithesis in Jewish life—the struggle between religion and secularism—deserves to be quoted in full:

There is a battle going on within Jewry that is more crucial than the struggle between Yiddish and Hebrew. Indeed, it has gone beyond the category of a debate, in which discussion is still possible, and has become an unbridgeable chasm. I speak of the antithesis between religion and secularism in Jewish thought. Hayyim Greenberg was aware that Jewry reborn would have to overcome this antithesis too. Deep within himself he discerned what form the reconciliation would have to take. It was as if the profundity of his intellect and the ethical quality of his personality

17. Ibid, p. 70.

18. Ibid., p. 74. The essay was written about 1954.

were together able to dispel even this antinomy. He recoiled from the notion that the revived culture of our people would have to be separated into two compartments: "secular" and "religious." In his mind's eye he perceived the Jew of the future, an authentic Jew as rooted in his ancestral heritage as in the life of his times, borne on the wings of the creative spirit in a consistently upward direction. In the intellectual-spiritual heights that Greenberg inhabited, the antithesis seemed to be reconciled; in his inward soul the quarrel appeared to be stilled, as though faced down by his beautiful mind and his noble spirit, by the authenticity of his Jewish culture, the depth of his Jewish roots and his all-embracing humanity.¹⁹

Every word of the foregoing can be applied to the biographer himself. It is a passage in which Shazar is no doubt telling us the direction he, himself, would like to see taken by Jewish culture in our time.

Another parallel between Shazar and Greenberg is that both of them were outstanding orators of the movement, artists of the first rank. From one end of the Jewish world to the other, each of them, in his own way, held audiences under a spell. Writes Shazar:

Even though in his later years Hayyim Greenberg became one of the most creative essayists in our literature, anyone who judges his work and his influence only by his written word will be missing half the story. His essays were at the peak of their form and influence in their original incarnation, as spoken lectures delivered to rapt audiences, before ever they were reduced to print.

Again, we cannot but notice how these words, intended to describe another person, reveal, as it were by inadvertance, the man who wrote them. Shazar's literary *oeuvre*, voluminous as it is, does not begin to encompass the wealth of word and thought that he dispensed to insatiable audiences from innumerable platforms. True, some of his lectures are included in his published work. Yet, even though an echo of his warm tone of voice is carried over onto the page, it is impossible to convey in print anything of the electric current that passed to and fro between the man at the rostrum and the listeners who drank in his words.

A kind of paradigm of Shazar's great speeches is his own description of Jaurès, speaking at the Congress of the Socialist International on the eve of the First World War. "All his bones, as Scripture says, spoke. Spoke? They cried out, raged, threatened, warned, swore solemnly, fought the battle of the Lord. I knew then that it was the Prophet of Socialism that I was listening to."²⁰ The description fits Shazar's own oratorical style like a glove. The only difference is that he was rarely denunciatory, for it was usually his mission to attract and to inspire.

But no matter how many of Shazar's own traits are reflected in his portraits of other men, his full stature can be seen only when we focus on the man himself. What comes through most strongly is that

19. *Or Ishim*, II, p. 95.

20. "War Against War," in *Morning Stars*, p. 231.

in every aspect of Jewish life he is an insider. Such catholicity of interests and sympathies would appear, on the face of it, to involve him in contradictions. But no, his open personality is such that opposing tendencies in Jewish life, both present and past, can dwell within him in harmony. His breadth of soul is illustrated by the fact that he is at one and the same time a man of the people, in the most complete sense of the word, and an aristocrat of the spirit, in the fullest meaning of the term.

An illustration of his broad sympathies is the poem, "*Beyn Eytanei Golah*," in which he imagines a conversation between two poles-apart Jewish leaders of the sixteenth century—Joseph of Rosheim and Shelomo Molkho.²¹ Here we have irreconcilable opposites—the responsible community leader, keenly conscious of the limits imposed by reality, and the soaring visionary, contemptuous of prudential calculations. During the debate which Shazar puts into the mouths of these two, neither one yields an inch. Both the messianic firebrand and the diplomatic advocate have all of logic and conviction in their favor. One senses that the poet can speak for each, because he knows that there is right on both sides; he is speaking from within himself. He is, to be sure, exempt from deciding the issue; history has taken care of that. In the event, the prudent realism of Joseph of Rosheim was proven correct; Shelomo Molkho was burned at the stake, martyr to a lost cause. And yet . . . and yet . . . the inner truth of Molkho's ideal, though crushed to earth, is not conquered.

The debate between those two was a purely internal Jewish one, about a question that has arisen time and again within the Jewish fold. But Shazar's reach is far from parochial. He is not willing to write off even the Sabbataian movement, despite its tragic failure. What fascinates him is the initial welcome given by the Jewish masses to the promise of redemption, and what that reveals about the Jewish state of mind. His scholarly research in this field is well known, but Shazar also wrote a Yiddish poem, in the form of a prayer, which he puts into the mouth of Matityahu Ashkenazi Bloch, an emissary of Sabbatai Zevi.²² Bloch ponders the enormous difficulties confronting his mission, and the fact that all he has to rely on is his own eloquence. He prays that he may be successful in winning over the Jews he will meet on his travels. He even admits the possibility that his cause may be a false one, and he himself liable of punishment; but he prays that judgment be deferred until he has completed his mission. How daring of Shazar to put so utterly Jewish

21. "*Beyn Eytanei Golah*," in the DAVAR Annual, 5714. Republished on Israel Independence Day, 5732, for the dedication of the new Presidential House, together with an English version, "Shtadlan and Redeemer," by Shulamith Schwartz Nardi (Jerusalem: Central Press).

22. Zalman Shazar, *Farzikh* (Tel Aviv: *Di Goldene Kayt*, 1972), pp. 8–12. (Written "enroute to New York, 1932.")

a prayer into the mouth of a representative of the excommunicated apostate! One guesses at something of his own heart-searching, something out of the years of his own peripatetic Zionist missions.

The final bankruptcy of the Sabbataian movement left its adherents completely outside the Jewish fold. It is characteristic of our author that he thinks back to a time previous, before the break, when he can reclaim them for the Jewish people. He has always sought to reunite the severed limbs of Jewry.

It is this motive that no doubt led him to his chosen role as a historian of Jewish messianic movements. He is fascinated by the flare-ups of passion for the return. But he is also attracted by something at the other end of the spectrum—the persistence of some dormant spark of Jewishness in social climates quite inhospitable to any kind of Jewish survival, as, for example, in the totally assimilated circles of modern times. An illustration is his outstanding essay on Karl Marx.²³

Marx, whose parents had him baptized, was a child of the generation of German Jews who staked everything on the struggle for equal status in Christian society, and were ready to pay any price to achieve that goal. Marx, himself, had something to say about the emancipation of the Jews, but he stood the usual argument on its head. It was not the Jews that needed to be liberated, but the world that needed to be liberated from the Jews!

Shazar submits this anti-Semitic broadside, one of the most poisonous of its kind, to a thorough historical analysis. He points out that, prior to Marx, the presiding spirit in European thought was Hegel, according to whom each of the great nations of the world is the embodiment of some particular idea. The Jews, however, represent no idea. Therefore, there is nothing to justify their existence. From which it follows that they ought to disappear. Now comes Marx, who transfers the focus of human history from nations to classes. As for the notion that peoples embody ideas, he rejects it—with one exception, namely the Jews. They are the very incarnation of the idea of capitalism; since capitalism is on the way out, they, too, must disappear . . . Instructive, is it not? Two thinkers start out from diametrically opposed premises, and arrive at an identical conclusion! Obviously, the conclusion is preconceived; in order to justify it, each man constructs his own rationale.

For the generation into which Karl Marx was born, it was axiomatic to all those seeking a position for Jews in western society that the last chapter of Jewish history was being written. It was inevitable that Jews and Judaism would disappear. What Marx did with this accepted certainty was to fit it in to his theories. The same doom that history had decreed for the bourgeoisie was about to overtake the Jews as well, since

23. *Orei Dorot*.

the idea they embodied was commerce, and what they worshipped was—the promissory note! Shazar shows us how Marx came to identify the Jewish people of every country and every epoch with the burgher class, on the basis of his own knowledge of a handful of wealthy Jews in his own time and place.

What a shock it would have given the great Karl Marx had he been able to see about a century ahead of his time, to discover his iron logic being confuted by a son of that very people doomed by historical inevitability to extinction; and, what is more, to find the self-same man serving as President of the Jewish State reborn!

Having exposed Marx' antipathy for the people of his origin, Shazar proceeds, nevertheless, to show how much of Marx' elaborate system rests on Jewish foundations. The notion that man's exploitation of man must some day come to an end; that there is such a thing as the just society, and that it can be achieved; that human happiness is possible—these are ideas of which the origin is easily recognizable. The same is true of a third principle, implied in the Marxian analysis; namely, that the struggle for righteousness is the major theme in human history.

Shazar has from time to time waxed lyrical in telling how Hebraic ideas have surfaced in the most unexpected times and places. Here again, how shocked Karl Marx would have been to be told that he inherited anything at all from his Jewish forebears!

Marx' anti-Jewish prejudices left their mark on the movement he founded, and even infected the early Jewish socialists themselves. Only gradually did most Jewish adherents of socialism rid their thinking of this aberration. Indeed, many of them came to play an important part in Jewish liberation movements, Zionism included.

Why did the socialist ideal find so much ready receptivity among Jews? In Shazar's opinion, because of its antecedents in the Jewish tradition. He underscored this in the very title he gave to one of his books: *Ziyon va-Zedek*—"Zion and Justice." For him, the alliteration symbolizes the interrelatedness of the two concepts, both of them deeply rooted in Jewish consciousness. So much, then, for Marx and his "promissory notes!"

A number of figures in international socialism, most of them Jews, are also dealt with by Shazar in his *Or Ishim*. During the first World War, the outstanding leaders of the movement turned away to become nationalist patriots; of those who remained faithful to the ideal, most were Jews. Among the latter was Martov, grandson of that Cederbaum who had been editor of the great Hebrew periodical *Ha-Meliz*. This grandson was one of those who turned their backs on any vestige of Jewish identity, even in the socialist camp. Yet Shazar, with his accustomed generosity, does not take these self-alienated Jews to task. Instead,

he admires them for remaining loyal to their own principles. His essay on Martov ends with the following evaluation of all those who shared his views: "Although events have vindicated those of us who committed ourselves to a Jewish future, let us not detract from the nobility of spirit of those alienated Jews. They showed themselves to be worthy descendants of great ancestors."²⁴

Shazar has never made it a habit to disparage his opponents, no matter how antagonistic their ideas are to his own. He has always respected the other man's right to differ, without in any way abandoning his own position. An example is the congratulatory letter he wrote to Meir Yaari:

All through the years I have admired your courage in taking up your stand at the most precarious fringe of our movement, just one step short of denying our right to exist at all. . . . May you be spared far into the future, to keep on fighting for your own point of view in your own inimitable way.

There is no yielding here, but there is a world of warmth and geniality. It takes a lot of wisdom to obey the Biblical injunction: "Love ye truth and peace." It is a fine art; Shazar has both the art and the wisdom.

That is the most remarkable thing about the man. He has always belonged to a particular movement, and been a member of a specific party, yet he has personal ties across the whole spectrum of Jewish life. In an age of divisiveness he is a uniquely unifying force. Here is a typical statement, taken from his essay on Weizmann: "It is our fate to realize the liberation of the Jew in a generation torn by centrifugal forces, and we have no choice but to try and overcome them." How fitting it is that the author of these words, a man devoted to bridging the chasms that split Jewry asunder, should have become the President of the Jewish State!

It is worth noting that most of this man's books bear titles that have something to do with light. But, then, his talent for discovering the inner light of men and things is probably derivative—derived from the luminosity of his own person.

24. *Or Ishim*, I, p. 29.

Marx and the Jews

LAWRENCE S. STEPELEVICH

RECENT SOVIET BIOGRAPHIES OF MARX HAVE managed to avoid any mention of his Jewish ancestry. This is quite a feat of ideological amnesia, even for the practiced, considering the remarkable extent and depth of that Jewish ancestry.

Rabbi Jehuda ben Elieser ha-Levi Minz is the earliest known member of that family line which saw Karl Marx as its most famous, or infamous, descendant. He avoided the worst effects of an unsurprising German persecution by fleeing to Padua in 1456, where he lived to see his son honored as its Chief Rabbi. In the genealogical tree which reached Marx through his father, there was only one generation which could not boast at least one rabbi. And among these rabbis were such famous figures as Joseph ben Gerson Cohen, who directed the Talmud school at Cracow until his death in 1591, and the equally learned Meir Katzenellenbogen, whose portrait hung in the great hall of the University of Padua. The grandfather of Karl Marx was the rabbi son of a rabbi father, and Karl's uncle Samuel was a member of the Parisian Great Sanhedrin and Chief Rabbi of the Department of the Saar. Trier, the city of Karl Marx's birth, had been ministered by rabbis of the Marxian line since the beginning of the seventeenth century.¹

Little is known of his mother's ancestry. Henrietta Philips was descended from a group of Hungarian Jews who had settled in Holland. Her father was a rabbi and, on the word of her grand-daughter, Karl's mother came from a family which could claim a century of rabbis. Indeed, to quote Friedrich Engels, "Marx was of the purest Jewish blood," a fact which seems only to embarrass his professional admirers.

Pure blood or not, in 1817 Karl Marx's father was received by baptism into the National Lutheran Church. Six years later he presided over the baptism of his seven children, Karl among them. These rites ended the effect, at least observable, that this mild form of Protestantism exercised over either the father or the son. One year later, Henrietta received baptism, her delay being caused, so it was explained, by her unwillingness to offend the sensibilities of her dying parents. There is no evidence to suggest that she opposed the baptism of her children or that she encouraged it. It seems not to have interested her.

The reasons which prompted Herschel Marx to accept baptism

1. Details of Marx's genealogy, as well as of his early family life and education, are given in Heinz Monz, *Karl Marx und Trier* (Trier, 1964).

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and become Heinrich Marx, and to see to it that his wife and children did likewise, are of a political and professional rather than theological character.

With the defeat of Napoleon, Trier found itself under the rule of the Prussian King, Friedrich Wilhelm III. With the growing reaction, the Rhineland Jews found themselves in danger of losing the privileges which they had found under the Napoleonic Code. As an advocate, Herschel Marx was directly affected by the reaction which, by 1822, was bold enough to prohibit all Rhenish Jews from engaging in the legal profession. By converting to Lutheranism he was enabled to continue his profession. Thus, the impractical intolerance of the Prussian government was met with the practical tolerance of Herschel Marx.

While he was at home, the young Karl's intellectual tutoring was in the hands of his father, whose favorites were such as Voltaire, Leibnitz, Kant, and the other urbane rationalists of the preceding century. It is probable that religious practices, whenever they might turn up in the course of a discussion, were treated as the dusty residue of medievalism, best left to evaporate in the light of the *Aufklärung*.

As to the mother, there is no evidence to suggest that she pressed the observance of either the old Jewish rites or the newly-adopted Christian ones. The horizon of Henrietta Marx did not extend beyond the immediate material cares of her family. There also seems to have existed an estrangement between her and her eldest son. Perhaps it was her clumsy language, still heavy with Dutch accents, which embarrassed the verbally adept son; perhaps it was her constant household anxieties. In any case, their relationship was never warm. Lewis F. Feuer has suggested that Marx's "hatred for his mother" was the ground of his "hatred for Judaism," that, in sum, "Marx's hatred for Judaism—otherwise inexplicable—was the outcome of an animosity toward all that his mother signified for him."² Feuer's thesis might be extreme, but certainly Marx's mother must have had, at least to an older Karl Marx, all of the alleged characteristics of the petty Jew—family-centered, provincial, without either wit or the means to express it.

Exempted by reasons of his mother's indifference and his father's philosophy from any positive religious training at home, Marx made his only formal acquaintance with religious dogma while attending the state Gymnasium of Trier. Naturally, the dogma was Christian. There were no offerings in the area of Judaism.

It is not improbable that, by the time of his graduation from the Gymnasium, Marx had already judged both Judaism and its adherents and found them wanting. Far too many, such as his father and his

2. Lewis F. Feuer, "Karl Marx and the Promethean Complex," *Encounter*, 31 (December, 1968), p. 25.

future friend, the poet Heine, had placed their social aims above their faith. For his part, Heinrich Marx was honored shortly before his death with the title of "Royal Prussian Legal Councillor." As for Heine, he never practiced law—although he had received Christian baptism in order to qualify for his Doctorate in Law. Such events as these, adding to the rationalism implanted in him by the tutoring of his father as well as his future father-in-law, the Prussian privy Councillor Ludwig von Westphalen, must have left the young Marx with the impression that Judaism had neither a future nor a pride in its past. Marx was not the only Jew of his time to think this way, for in Prussia alone, from 1812 to 1846, it is recorded that 3,770 Jews were received into the Christian faith. Berlin, the city which knew and accepted Moses Mendelssohn, lost three-quarters of its Jewish community to baptism in the same period.

But unlike so many of his Jewish contemporaries, who struggled either to retain or to renounce their religion, Marx never gave any public indication of whatever concern he might have felt regarding Judaism. Although he did discuss the "Jewish Question" briefly in a few youthful articles, the discussion was placed within the context of economics. As to any matters of particular concern to the Jewish communities in Europe, or of developments within the religion itself, Marx kept his silence. In short, he behaved as if he were not a Jew nor had ever been a Jew. Joel Carmichael notes that Marx always "kept himself strictly disengaged from any indication of sympathy with the Jews," and ignored the evident cases of social injustices perpetrated upon German Jewry.³ Another biographer, Otto Ruhle, observed that Marx wrote in such a way about Jews that he seemed to be "declaring himself before all the world not to be a Jew."⁴ That fine scholar, Edmund Silberner, has stated the causes of Marx's "non-Jewishness" most clearly:

No one is proud to derive from an inferior people, and it is understandable that Marx—always conscious of his Jewish origin—tried to alleviate his burden by endeavoring to become non-Jewish. This endeavor—typical of his Jewish self-hatred—led him repeatedly to attacks on the Jews. His aggressiveness towards them was a means of convincing himself and the outside world how little Jewish he was, in spite of his rabbinical ancestors.⁵

If Marx ever convinced himself that he was not Jewish, he never succeeded in convincing anyone else. From the blunt charge of his earlier partner, Arnold Ruge, that young Marx was nothing more than an "insolent Jew," through the disgusting slurs of Bakunin and Duhring, Marx was never permitted a racial anonymity. Hitler, of course, saw the whole of Communism as nothing more than a "Jewish doctrine" which

3. Joel Carmichael, *Karl Marx: The Passionate Logician* (New York, 1967), p. 75.

4. Otto Ruhle, *Karl Marx* (New York, 1927), p. 377.

5. Edmund Silberner, "Was Marx an Anti-Semite?" *Historica Judaica*, 11 (April, 1949), p. 14.

sprang naturally from that "Jew Marx." From the beginning, Marx and Marxism could never escape their Jewish ancestry, and they were never permitted to forget it.

In the fall of 1835, Marx left Trier for Bonn, there to attend the University as a student of law. It was, academically, a disappointing year, filled with brawls and drunken events. One year later, he transferred to the University of Berlin. This University, founded twenty-five years earlier in the heat of a burgeoning nationalism, had its first Rector in the philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte who, though personally friendly with a number of the fashionable *Berliner* Jews, was, nevertheless, politically constrained to recommend that Jews be not permitted to hold Prussian citizenship, in that they constituted "a nation within a nation." This conclusion was followed by observing that the Jews held together, not out of common love for one another but out of common hatred for others. He was followed in his opinion by the noted historian, Friedrich Rühs, who added that the members of the Jewish community should wear a ribbon for identification. Still, by 1835, the movement for Jewish civic emancipation had gained some small momentum, and it was the year in which Baruch Auerbach founded Berlin's first school for Jewish girls. Marx, however, never referred to these revolutionary stirrings in Berlin. He spent his first year in the time-honored undergraduate occupation of "trying to find himself." As the year wore on, his interests turned to the writing of poetry.

Two of his short poems were published in the radical Berlin weekly, *Athenaeum*, and through it he gained entry into a group known as the "Doctors Club." Consisting of poets, newspapermen and others inclined to revolutionary agitation, the club had fallen under the influence of Dr. Bruno Bauer, one of Berlin's most outspoken atheists. The club would later evolve into the even more notorious circle, the "Free Ones," which would include in its membership the young Engels as well as the anarchist, Max Stirner. In brief, as another biographer of Marx, Leopold Schwartzchild, wrote: "The club was seething with hostility towards God and religion. Everything connected with religion was a challenge to modern scientific reason."

As did many others, young Marx fell under the influence of Bauer and attended his lectures on the book of *Isaiah*. And, so, he was introduced to a study that touched upon the religion of his birth by one of the University's foremost atheists, a thinker whose whole philosophic programme was grounded upon a systematic and absolute atheism. A friendship developed between them, and Marx looked forward to joining Bauer as a fellow professor at the University of Bonn, where Bauer had transferred in the fall of 1839. There, if Bauer had not been dismissed for "blasphemies" which, as he proudly declared, were so terrible that

"the hair of innocent students stood on end," he and Marx were to edit a new "Journal for the Study of Atheism." Indeed, atheism, for this Berlin circle of revolutionaries, was not merely a stance taken to shock the *Bürgers*, but the logical outcome of Hegelianism—a doctrine to which they all subscribed even when most critical of it.

Hegel, the teacher of Bauer, had remained the philosophic master of the University for some time after his death in 1831, and Hegel's attitude toward Judaism was unquestionably negative. Bauer summed up his master's view in one simple sentence: "Hegel hated nothing more than the Jews."⁶ To Hegel, the Jewish religion could be adjudged only as a historical dead-end street committed to the endless repetition of "dead formulas." From his earliest statements regarding Judaism to his final words, Hegel held to the opinion that it was a fossilized dogma "overwhelmed by a burden of statutory commands" and fit only for the slavish. In short, "the Jewish attitude . . . is that of servility."⁷ At least one critic of Hegel, Karl Popper, has charted a "transubstantiation of Hegelianism into racialism" and, indeed, there is some ground for tracing a path from Hegel through Haeckel's biological materialism into the National Socialism of Rosenberg.

The second major influence upon Marx was yet another student of Hegel, the humanistic theologian, Ludwig Feuerbach. Friedrich Engels once recalled the impact that both he and Marx sustained upon the appearance of Feuerbach's shocking work, *The Essence of Christianity*.—

One must himself have experienced the liberating effect of this book to get an idea of it. Enthusiasm was general: we all became at once Feuerbachians. How enthusiastically Marx greeted the new conception and how much . . . he was influenced by it, one may read in *The Holy Family*.⁸

Now, regarding the Jewish people and their religion, Feuerbach's "new conception" added a darker dimension to the Hegelian characterization. Consistent with his general theory, Feuerbach viewed the religious practices of the Jews as being nothing more than the exaggerated projections of their worldly concerns. As they lived in a social milieu which established its highest values in self-seeking egoism and hostility to Nature, so their God was the supreme possessor of these traits. For Feuerbach, Jehovah was "nothing but the personified selfishness of the Israelitish people." Since "to the Jews Nature was a mere means toward achieving the end of egoism, a mere object of will," so even the doctrine of "creation as a purely imperious act, had its origin only in the unfathomable depth of Hebrew egoism." In sum, Feuerbach

6. Bruno Bauer, *Die Posaune des jüngsten Gerichts über Hegel* (Leipzig, 1841), p. 106.
7. G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, ed. G. Lasson (Leipzig, 1923), 2, p. 457.

8. F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy* (New York, 1941), p. 17.

concluded that Jewish religious theory had originated "solely in need to give a warrant to utilism, to egoism, which contains and expresses nothing but the command to make Nature an object of utilization." This was written in 1841.⁹ One year later, Marx declared himself to be a follower of Feuerbach—" . . . there is no other road for you to *truth* and *freedom* except that leading *through* the stream of fire (the Feuerbach). Feuerbach is the *purgatory* of the present times."¹⁰ What traits Feuerbach had affixed to the Jews would be found again in Marx's description of the Capitalists.

In the Spring of 1841, Marx left the University of Berlin, never to return. By this time, his attitude toward Judaism must have been crystallized into contempt. Nevertheless, two years later, he appeared ready to assist the small Jewish community in Cologne.

He and Arnold Ruge, a radical political writer, were planning to publish a new journal, the *German-French Annals* [*Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*]. In a letter to Ruge concerning itself with the new project, Marx added an interesting note: "The leader of the local Jews has just come to ask me to write a petition for the Jews to the Rhenish Diet [*Landtag*], and I am going to do it." He went on immediately to correct any false impression of liberality on his part which might disturb the anti-Semite Ruge. He pointed out that the whole matter of writing a petition for the Cologne Jews was merely a practical revolutionary tactic:

Repugnant as the Israelite faith is to me, Bauer's view [that the Jews must first become atheists] seems too abstract to me. As many holes as possible should be driven into the Christian State in order to smuggle in, as much as we can, the rational view. At any rate, one must try to do it—and the embitterment grows with every petition that is turned down under protest.¹¹

Who the Jewish leader was, why he asked Marx to draft a petition, or if the petition was ever written are questions that remain unanswered to this day.

One month after this letter to Ruge, the *Rheinische Zeitung*, with Marx as editor, was banned by Prussian authorities. Remarkably, as both editor and contributor, Marx contributed nothing to the dialogue revolving about the "Jewish Question," a dialogue which occupied a great deal of space in the newspaper. The radical paper fully advocated Jewish political and social emancipation; its view, according to Silberner, was "secular, reasonable, and humane." With the banning of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, Marx and Ruge were free to set about preparing

9. Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. G. Eliot (New York, 1857), p. 117 ff.

10. Karl Marx, *Writings of the Young Marx*, trans. and ed. by Loyd D. Easton and Kurt H. Guddat (New York, 1967), p. 95.

11. Marx—Engels, *Werke* (Berlin, 1957), 27, p. 416. [My translation.]

the *German-French Annals*, which finally appeared, in the first and final edition, from Paris, in February of 1844.

The journal introduced its point of view by featuring an exchange of letters between the co-editors and Feuerbach, with a contribution by Bakunin—letters in which, as one commentator remarked, “a pilloried *philistine* stares at the reader from every paragraph.” The journal also featured an article by Engels as well as a poem by Heine. Marx contributed a full article as well as two review-articles directed to a criticism of Bauer’s analysis of the Jewish Question.¹² Joel Carmichael has summed up Marx’s contributions in these words:

The article on Hegel had all of the abstruseness of such articles, while the one on the Jews was so filled with a particular vituperative, abusive quality that it made a curious impression of paranoid extremism.

Marx’s basic criticism of Bauer’s analysis of the Jewish Question is that Bauer approached the issue as if it were merely one of religion, whereas it was essentially a problem springing from socio-economic disorders. To Marx, the first step in solving the Jewish issue is to fix upon the “everyday Jew” of the present and not the “Sabbath Jew” of religion. The failure to ground his thought upon the actual secular manifestation of Judaism compelled Bauer into irrelevant theological argumentation. By contrast to Bauer’s theological approach, Marx would set forth “the profane basis of Judaism” in order to present a real solution to the problem of Jewish emancipation.

The first fact, to Marx, is that the basis of Judaism is found in “*practical need, self-interest.*” The worldly Jew is a pragmatic egoist. Further analysis of this “everyday Jew” provides answers to several questions: “What is the worldly cult of the Jew? *Huckstering [der Schacher]*. What is his worldly god? *Money.*” In this whole characterization, the evidence of Bauer and Feuerbach’s attitudes is strikingly present. Marx, however, adds his own economic dimension to the caricature:

Money is the jealous god of Israel . . . the god of the Jews has been secularized and has become the god of the world. The bill of exchange is the real god of the Jew.¹⁴

So far-reaching has been this commercial corruption that it has even destroyed the relationship between the sexes, and “the species-relation itself, the relation between man and woman, becomes an object of commerce. Woman is bartered away.” Commercial corruption, the dialectic of money, has transformed the theoretical Jew—the Christian—into the practical Jew—the Capitalist. In brief, Marx held that Judaism perfects itself in Capitalism, and that the Capitalist is the perfected Jew.

12. *Writings of the Young Marx*, pp. 216–248.

13. Carmichael, *Op. cit.*, p. 75.

14. Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, tr. and ed. by T. B. Bottomore (New York, 1963), p. 37.

This being the case, then, the total destruction of Judaism in its theoretical, Christian form as well as its practical, Capitalistic form is a necessary pre-condition for the emergence of a new world. In his final paragraph, Marx reveals his solution to the Jewish question:

As soon as society succeeds in abolishing the empirical essence of Judaism—huckstering and its conditions—the Jew becomes impossible, because his consciousness no longer has an object. The subjective basis for Judaism—practical need—assumes a human form, and the conflict between the individual, sensuous existence of man and his species-existence is abolished.

The social emancipation of the Jew is the *emancipation of society from Judaism*.¹⁵

This review-article certainly made its small contribution to the formulation of that fatal equation between Judaism and exploitative Capitalism which bore its fruit in the doctrines of National Socialism.

With the failure of the new journal, and all of the consequent bitterness with Arnold Ruge, Marx was pleased to encounter a life-long friend and ideological ally in Friederich Engels. Shortly after meeting they embarked upon a work entitled *The Holy Family*, intended to settle their philosophic relationships with the rest of the Hegelian school, such as Bruno Bauer and Feuerbach. It contained three sub-sections, written by Marx, which were directed to a further examination of the Jewish Question.

The observations contained in *The Holy Family* are the last formal statements Marx ever made on the issue of Jewish political and social emancipation. They contain nothing essentially new to the philosophical solutions proposed in the *German-French Annals* but, unexpectedly, they do support this emancipation.

A number of Jewish leaders, Gustav Philippson, Samuel Hirsch Salomon, and Gabriel Riesser among them, had taken issue with Bauer's contention that the Jews, *via* atheism, are to pass into political freedom. Marx is once again constrained to criticize Bauer for confusing political and religious issues, issues which had finally been separated during the course of Europe's Enlightenment. Unhappily for Bauer, he had never understood that the "Jew is a necessary link" in the dialectic of history, and if a "free civil society" was a necessary state in the development of human freedom, then the Jew must be drawn into that free society. Shlomo Avineri has summed up the reason for Marx's unexpected liberalism:

Marx's criticism of bourgeois society and of the role the Jews play in it, . . . does not prevent him from demanding full civil and political rights for the Jews, not because Jewish emancipation signifies the "journey's end," but because those rights are in accordance with the premises of bourgeois society itself.¹⁶

15. Ibid, p 40.

16. Shlomo Avineri, "Marx and Jewish Emancipation," *Journal of the History of Ideas* (July, 1964), p. 448.

And, so, the dialectic within these “premises of bourgeois society” logically forces the separation of political life from religious life even to the point where the Jews are politically free. In short, the state must become purely secular in its concerns, and being or not being a Jew has no consequences. This process of secularization, to which all history tends, is but the prelude to the “human society”—the “classless society” of later Marxism.

Hence, from the arguments presented in *The Holy Family*, the degree to which the Jewish elements of a society share in political emancipation is the measure of that society’s secularization; it is a revolutionary barometer. On this point Marx is unequivocal: “States which cannot yet *politically* emancipate the Jews must be rated by comparison with accomplished states and must be considered as undeveloped.”¹⁷

Both Marx’s earlier willingness to prepare a petition for Cologne’s Jewish community and his arguments in *The Holy Family* bear witness to his support of Jewish political freedom. But it is to be remembered that, to Marx, political freedom was no absolute, but merely the necessary stage for the development of a *human* society. Of itself, the Jewish cause had no intrinsic merit to Marx, being a straw in the revolutionary wind indicating the coming of the final society.

The notion that developing Jewish political and social freedom marked historical progress, the false dawn of a revolution, persisted as an element in Communist thought for some time. In 1890, seven years after the death of Marx, Engels presented a somewhat distorted version of Marx’s original formula:

Anti-Semitism is the characteristic sign of a backward civilization and is therefore only found in Prussia, Austria, or in Russia . . . it is a variety of feudal socialism and with that we can have nothing to do. If it is possible in a country, that is a sign that there is not enough capital in that country.¹⁸

In the same letter, Engels goes on to sympathize with the “Jewish proletarians” in Turkey, and then notes that Socialists

owe much to the Jews. To say nothing of Heine and Börne, Marx was of the purest Jewish blood; Lassalle was a Jew. Many of our best people are Jews.

Still, Marx and Engels remained totally silent during the Russian pogroms of April, May and June of 1881, and those “Jewish proletarians” were left unconsolated.

The final effusions of Engels’ letter ring hollow, upon recollecting the bitter and repellent anti-Semitism that both he and Marx exhibited

17. Marx—Engels, *Werke*, 2, p. 117.

18. Marx—Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (New York, 1936), p. 471.

in the course of their polemics. Engels had once revealed his real feeling regarding one of these "best people" in a letter to Marx:

Lassalle . . . a typical Jew from the Slavic border, always ready to exploit everyone for his private ends. His mania for pushing his way into distinguished circles and making a successful career, at the same time concealing, with all kinds of hair-oil and make-up, the fact that he is nothing but a greasy [*schmierigen*] Jew from Breslau, has always been repulsive to me.¹⁹

Marx shared this view. On the character of Lassalle he once exercised his wit by theorizing that the shape of Lassalle's head and hair clearly indicated that:

he is descended from the Negroes [*Nigern*] who joined Moses during the Exodue (unless his mother or grandmother on the father's side were crossed with a nigger [*Niger*]). This union of Jew and German on a Negro base must create a singular product. The importunity of the fellow is also nigger-like [*niggerhaft*].²⁰

However, Marx's general contempt for religion might almost excuse his evident anti-Semitism. As one forgiving author, Oscar Hammen, notes: "It is possible to charge Marx with anti-Semitism . . . but he had said the same thing a thousandfold more often in regard to the Christian faith."²¹ But even if this were so, i.e., that he had said the same thing "a thousandfold more often in regard to the Christian faith,"—which he did *not*—it was certainly not the same thing being said of *both* Christian and Jew, nor, more importantly, was it being said to the same people. What could be said against the Christian majority could only be irritating; what was said against the Jews could be, and was, disastrous.

Any reader must be impressed by the abundance of racial and religious abuse in the letters of Marx. A literary critic of the correspondence of Marx and Engels concluded that it "is as obsessively anti-Semitic as it is scatological."²²

The character and persistence of Marx's "informal" view of Judaism is best illustrated by his sarcastic observation, in a letter to Engels, that Ramsgate, England, was "full of Jews and fleas." Marx wrote this in 1879, four years before his death. When he was a young man of 27, he once criticized Feuerbach for viewing "practice" in its "dirty-Jewish form of appearance." But the adjective, "dirty," is neither found in Feuerbach nor required in context. It is simply an unseemly interjection.

Even in the most formidable of Marx's work, *Capital*, the old themes of the Berlin group are revived. In the first volume, published during Marx's life, the Doctors Club has its final cruel echo:

19. Marx—Engels, *Werke*, 24, p. 30 (Letter of March 7, 1856).

20. *Ibid.*, 30, p. 259 (Letter of July 30, 1862).

21. Oscar J. Hammen, *The Red '48ers* (New York, 1969), p. 72.

22. Stanley Hyman, *The Tangled Bank* (New York, 1968), p. 286.

Trading nations, properly so-called, exist in the ancient world only in its interstices, like the gods of Epicurus in the Intermundia, or like the Jews in the pores of Polish society. . . .²³

This was not the first time that Marx had compared the Jews to the gods of Epicurus, for the same simile occurs in his 1857 work, *Outline of the Critique of Political Economy*, and the theme is first found, in its original form, in one of Bauer's early essays. The old prejudices were never lost.

The genius of Marx can be said to lie, not so much in his creations, for they are few, but in his ability to link the creations of others into a larger pattern. However, this synthesizing talent could as easily seize upon gutter prejudice as upon Hegelian metaphysics, as the following exercise in theological bias indicates:

The monotheism of the Jews is, therefore, in reality, a polytheism of the numerous needs of man, a polytheism which makes even the lavatory [*Abtritt*] an object of divine regulation.²⁴

Here complexity cloaks a suggestion of bathroom wit.

Marx was, above all, a revolutionist committed to the overthrow of private property and, as such, he was never interested in the Jewish question. Again, he was not an atheist on strict principle, as was Bauer, nor was he an anti-Semite on political principle, like Ruge. However, to claim, as does Eric Fromm, that "to designate Marx as an anti-Semite is nothing but cold-war propaganda,"²⁵ is simply foolish.

Marx supported the Jewish movement for political emancipation only insofar as it had a revolutionary potential. He uncritically accepted the theoretical slander that thinkers such as Feuerbach and Bauer cast upon Judaism. Furthermore, he joined Engels in mocking the persons of Jews precisely because they were Jews. The conclusion of Edmund Silberner is valid: "Marx not only can but *must* be regarded as an outspoken anti-Semite."²⁶

For many reasons, Marx would willingly have accepted Silberner's conclusion.

23. *Capital* (New York, 1906), p. 91.

24. *Early Writings*, p. 37.

25. *Ibid.*, p. v.

26. Silberner, *Op. cit.*, p. 50.

Man's Power and Limits in a Technological Age

SAMUEL E. KARFF

WHEN ISRAEL'S WEIZMANN INSTITUTE OBTAINED its second computer, the staff groped for an appropriate nickname. When someone suggested that it be called "The Golem" all agreed. In Jewish folklore, a golem is a man-made robot. It is said that the prophet Jeremiah and a companion once searched for the secret formula to create such a golem. They savored success when a robot suddenly appeared before them. Etched on its forehead were the Hebrew words *Adonai Elohim Emet*—"God the Lord is Truth." Bearing a knife in its hand, the robot scratched out the letter *aleph* from the word *Emet*. Now the inscription on its forehead read: *Adonai Elohim Met*—"God the Lord is Dead."¹

This remarkable legend, which predates the technological age by centuries, embraces the fear that the new age of unprecedented human self-assertion will destroy the traditional image of man. This understanding of the human situation may be discerned from a study of aggadah, the symbolic language in which our tradition speaks of God's covenant with Israel and all mankind. Covenant man, so exquisitely limned in Biblical and Rabbinic aggadah, is at once uniquely empowered and existentially limited. Man stands before God who calls him into being, summons him into sacred partnership and endows his finite labors with abiding value.

This essay will focus on three components in the traditional image of man's power and limits. (1) The divine gift of dominion over nature is conditional: man is accountable to God for his stewardship thereof. (2) The divine gift of freedom makes man potentially the most noble and the most dangerous creature on earth. Man's freedom is God's supreme risk under the covenant. (3) The divine decree of death is man's ineluctable encounter with his own creatureliness. His hope for transcendence depends on God's infinite power and love.

Each of these traditional views has been challenged by the promethean thrust of a technological age. The Biblical poet and Rabbinic aggadist reflected a man tethered to earth and subject to the fateful fall of the genetic dice. Our perspective is fashioned at a time when man has stood on the surface of the moon and is deciphering the genetic code.

1. G. Scholem, *The Kabbalah and Its Symbolism* (New York: Schocken, 1965), p. 180.

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The ancient sages pondered the ambiguity of man's moral posture. They spoke of man's freedom to accrue merit and incur guilt, his power to serve or betray the will of God. The behaviorists in our time regard the concept of man's "freedom and dignity" as obsolete, claiming that the traditional triad—sin, repentance, and forgiveness—must now be pre-empted by a technological solution to man's pernicious moral hang-ups. Finally, we have been told that death, itself, is no longer acceptable to technological man. As we learn more about the aging process and gain genetic mastery over disease, we shall transcend our mortal limits and may engineer an alternative to death.

I shall contend that the technological revolution, far from invalidating the Jewish view of covenant man, renders it all the more illuminating and compelling.

I

An aggadah: Hadrian returned from his conquests and demanded to be deified by his courtiers. When they reminded him that he had not yet captured God's city (Jerusalem) and house (Temple) the emperor proceeded to ravage the Holy City and exile its people. Returning to be adored, he was, instead, further challenged, this time by the philosophers. One declared: "You may not claim to have deposed the King as long as you remain imprisoned in his palace. God's palace is heaven and earth. Only after you have transcended His abode will you deserve to be worshipped."

A second philosopher taunted Hadrian with this challenge: "Do me a favor; a vessel with all my belongings is becalmed several miles at sea." Hadrian responded: "I'll send a legion after it." To which the philosopher retorted: "Why not just activate the winds? If you have no control over the winds how can you declare yourself God?"² Thus did the aggadah confirm the limits of man's physical power.

A modern aggadah: Theologian William Hamilton took his son out to the backyard on a clear night to identify some constellations for a school assignment. The son looked up at the heavens and asked: "Which are the ones we put up there, Dad?"³

The crucial difference between man's situation in an age of classical aggadah and ours is that so much which was once perceived as the unchallengeable province of divine power has become, in our time, a domain of human self-assertion. In an updated Hadrian story the philosopher's vessel might be nuclear powered and the emperor, by pressing a remote switch at "Hadrian Control," could command the vessel's return. Indeed, Hadrian's successors may display impressive

2. Tanhuma, *Bereshit*, 8b-9a.

3. Roger L. Shinn, *Man: The New Humanism* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), p. 153.

gestures to support their power ploy. In a technological age, the boundary lines between the power of Caesar (Hadrian) and the power of God appear to have radically shifted.

Ancient covenant man was also endowed with dignity and power—dominion over nature. He was God's partner in confirming the order and meaning of life. But his creatureliness was also confirmed by his earth-boundness and by the vista of the heavens. The Psalmist asks: "When I behold the heavens, what is man that Thou art mindful of him . . ." (Psalm 8). For all his power, covenant man's naked eye compelled him to acknowledge his limits. What of man the incipient space traveler? Can the traditional image of man define a creature who places "stars" in the sky and walks on the surface of the moon? This challenge may not be ignored.

In the Book of Isaiah, the challenge seems almost to have been anticipated. We read: "Thou hast said in Thy heart 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will become like unto God.'" The author of that boast, we are told, is the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. Alas, said R. Johanan b. Zakkai, his efforts were doomed, because the journey to the end of the firmament would take a thousand years, whereas the days of man's years are at best fourscore.⁴

The astronomical calculations of the sages are as outdated as the Bible's estimate of the earth's age. We speak, not of a thousand years, but of two billion years at the speed of 186,000 miles per second to approach the nearest star. But, while the numbers have changed, the status of the principles remains unaltered. Even the nearest star is so astronomically distant that it remains forever beyond our reach. Ironically, as C. P. Snow reminds us, the space age may bring us to the end of man's last physical frontier. Our solar system appears dead and the "distances to any other system are so gigantic that it would take the entire history of mankind from Paleolithic man to the present day to travel at the speed of Apollo XI the distance to the nearest star."⁵

Space man peering through his telescope may still ask: "When I behold Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou has created, what is man that Thou are mindful of him?"

New dimensions of man's technological prowess are displayed, not only in the heavens, but on earth. Man is capable of reshaping his terrestrial environment in ways which the ancient sages could not anticipate. Nevertheless, the aggadic concept of man's stewardship and accountability will repay an earnest hearing. Long before the invention of the combustion engine or the bulldozer, the aggadah portrays Adam in the Garden of Eden receiving this divine admonition: "Behold, all which I have created is for your benefit, but beware lest you despoil and

4. Babylonian Talmud, *Hagigah*, 13a.

5. C. P. Snow, "The Moon Landing," *Look*, August 26, 1969, p. 72.

destroy my world, for if you do there is no one who will repair it after you.”⁶ Significantly, some of the most trenchant updating of that aggadah has come, not from preachers, but from men of science. Biologist Garrett Hardin writes:

We are a terribly clever people, we moderns. We bend nature to our will in countless ways. We move mountains . . . fly at speeds no other organism can achieve and tap the power of the atom. The essentially religious feeling of subserviency to a power greater than ourselves comes hard to us clever people. But by our intelligence we are now beginning to make out the limits to our cleverness . . . we are experiencing a return to a religious orientation to the world.⁷

The technological revolution has not discredited the aggadah's view of man's essential finitude and accountability for his stewardship of nature. In one respect, however, the aggadah must be revised. We are told that when God mused over the creation of man He consulted with three sets of angels. Each group unanimously counselled against it. God disregarded their advice and proceeded with His creative scheme. After man stalked the earth for a while and demonstrated his destructiveness, the third group of angels teased God: “Did not the first (angels) speak right?” But God reaffirms a readiness to bear with man despite his folly.⁸

To update this tale we must acknowledge that man is now capable of proving decisively that the angels were right. Man's power now enables him to destroy his species and undermine the conditions required for human life on our earthly orb. The stakes are now much higher. We have moved from the sandlot to the major leagues, and man may take himself out of the ballgame. In that case, He whom the aggadah refers to as “Master of Worlds” would be compelled to start anew.

Thus, whether we peer through a telescope or ponder an ecological manual, we discover that man's awesome power remains, paradoxically, the ultimate confirmation of his finitude, and the terms of the covenant remain intact: “I have set before thee life and death—choose life” (Deut. 30:19).

II

An aggadah on Genesis speaks of man's uniqueness in moral terms. Man eats from the tree of knowledge of good and evil; thereby, he becomes conscious of his power to serve or betray God's purposes. The man who enters into a covenant with God has lost his innocence (Gen. 3:7). Man's unique endowment (self-conscious power and freedom) renders him, potentially, the most noble and the most brutish creature on

6. *Kohélet Rabbah* 7:28.

7. R. Burhoe, ed., *Science and Human Values in the 21st Century* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), p. 170.

8. Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin*, 38b.

earth. Man, alone, dreams exalted dreams, sacrifices for them and betrays them. He, alone, consciously seeks both good and evil and is aware of a transcendent standard by which to judge his life. Man, alone, is capable of being God's faithful partner and God's most dangerous enemy.

Why does man abuse his power and freedom? This question brings us to the aggadah's concept of *yezer*, that primary energy which endows man's freedom with dynamic power. At times the aggadah pictures an inner struggle, a divided self, a war between *yezer hara* (the evil inclination) and *yezer hatov* (man's good inclination). Man needs God's help in struggling with his *yezer*. Rabbi Tanhum prays that the evil *yezer*—"the yeast in the dough"—be subdued.⁹ But there can be no leavened bread without yeast! This image implies that the very energy which uniquely empowers man's monstrous evil is also enlisted in man's noblest achievements.

The spiritual goal for man is to "serve God with both *yezers*."¹⁰ This is the model of integrity—wholeness—and the struggle to attain it is the enduring spiritual challenge of man's life. Man *knows*, however, that his power may be used to serve or betray the covenant. The temptation to defy is an ever present danger. Two models of betrayal are featured in aggadah: sex and idolatry.

In our faddishly sensate culture it has become camp to divest sexuality of moral overtones. For all its celebration of the goodness and beauty of physical love, the aggadah maintains that sexuality is never morally neutral. In Biblical aggadah, human sexuality is identified with the loss of innocence. Adam knew that he was naked. Sexual awareness is part of man's consciousness of his power to serve or to flout the purposes of his creator. Many of the references to the evil inclination in Rabbinic literature are sexual, but the Rabbinic wedding benedictions also celebrate the gift of joyous love. Sex is a primary manifestation of the energy which, in man, uniquely becomes a way of sanctifying or profaning the intention of God.

Despite our culture's attempt to regard sex as play or as alternative to violence (make love, not war) many of the four letter words expressing hostility have patently sexual overtones. This alone suggests that sex is the manifestation of a broader human power. Sex may be an expression of mutually sanctifying love or a manipulative, hostile ploy.

The most flagrant manifestation of man's abusive power is idolatry—the desire to displace God or destroy God's power. Nebuchadnezzar purportedly proclaims "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the most high" (Is. 14:14). Such attempted displacement may consist, not only of physically challenging the boundaries which con-

9. Jerusalem Talmud, *Berakhot*, chap. IV-33b, 34a.

10. Mishnah *Berakhot* 9:5.

firm man's finitude, but of disarming God's presence or authority on earth. Thus, King Ahaz decrees the shutting of synagogues and schools in order that study and prayer will cease and God will not permit His presence to dwell on earth. Thus would the domain of God yield, by default, to the dominion of Ahaz.¹¹

The sin of idolatry is, in one form or another, an effort to usurp that ultimate authority which belongs to God. That sin is especially venal in persons with political power, who thereby deny their accountability to God. Indeed, both Biblical and Rabbinic aggadah confirm that in pre-messianic days there is a tension between power and goodness. Even the greatest Biblical king was in need of prophetic judgment. David required Nathan. Only in the end of days will that tension be resolved. The Messiah will be one in whom power and goodness will be united.

In at least three discernible ways has a confrontation emerged between the aggadah's view of man's moral nature and the competing images of man in a technological age. First, *the aggadah affirms the reality of human freedom*. The concept of *yezer* was not intended as a repudiation of man's power to choose between good and evil. Covenant man is held accountable because he has the power to obey or to defy God. "All is in the hands of heaven except the fear of heaven."¹² The Angel of Conception determines many things, but not whether someone will be good or evil.¹³ Indeed, the very meaning of human character depends on the assumption that virtue is at least, in part, an achievement, not a fateful gift. God, Himself, is not spared the risk of freedom.

Rabbi Berechiah said: When the Holy One, Blessed Be He, came to create man He saw righteous and wicked arising from him. Said God, if I should create him, wicked men will spring from him, if I do not create him, how will righteous spring from him?¹⁴

Professor B. F. Skinner and other behaviorists regard this traditional notion of "freedom and dignity" as a pernicious illusion. A person's behavior, they claim, is not determined by a willing self, but by genetic factors and "by the environmental circumstances to which he as an individual has been exposed."¹⁵

It is no more of a personal achievement for a man to choose the good than for a pigeon, properly conditioned, to dance a figure eight. Change the inner and outer environment and you will modify the behavior. Why does man not conform to our ideals? Because we have not yet created a social environment that reinforces such behavior.

11. *Bereshit Rabbah* 42:3.

12. Babylonian Talmud, *Berakhot*, 33b.

13. Babylonian Talmud, *Niddah*, 16b.

14. *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:4.

15. B. F. Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (New York: Knopf, 1971), p. 101.

Theoretically, we could, and should, make goodness as automatic as the salivation of Pavlov's dog in the presence of food.

Skinner would acknowledge that his view is no more provable than the traditional concept of human freedom and dignity. At first glance, however, the behaviorist's position is beguilingly seductive to modern man. After all, we have rediscovered the limits of human freedom. It is the mark of advanced societies to ask of a criminal not only: did he do it? but did he have the power to choose between right and wrong? We have qualified guilt by the notion of "sickness."

In jurisprudence, as in life, the line between limited freedom and determinism may be thin. Even the traditional aggradists were aware of the *yezer's* threat to man's moral choice. But neither they nor we existentially regard sin simply as sickness, virtue simply as an instance of mental health. We praise and we blame. We judge human life as if character were, at least in part, a personal achievement.

Even when the term illness (sickness) is appropriate, the concept of freedom remains intact. We admire a man for the way he chooses to deal with his illness. Does he recognize it? Does he seek therapy? Does he struggle to confront his demons and gain mastery over them? Emotional illness does not negate freedom or character, but tests it in another way. Freedom is not the absence of limiting conditions. Freedom is our power to deal with the boundaries of life creatively.

The Skinner alternative to freedom and dignity may beguile us on other grounds. After all, the religious view of man has not ushered in the Messianic age. How many religious pageants of confession, repentance and atonement have been enacted through the ages without radically elevating the quality of human life? Such gentle taunts may be capped by the question: why not give the new social engineering a try? In truth, however, Skinner has offered, thus far, no concrete model of social engineering which would predictably resolve our major social traumas. He has not told us what schedules of reinforcement are required to remove racial prejudice, corruption in government, economic exploitation or war. Even if he did, it might be necessary to reject his counsel on other grounds.

Suppose Skinner's world could be brought about, would it be a dream come true or a nightmare? Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* imagines Skinner's scenario. Alex, the leader of a teenage gang which has terrorized old and young with vicious acts of violence, is caught, charged with second degree murder, convicted and imprisoned. Alex has agreed to participate in an elaborate experiment of conditioning through visual, auditory and electrical stimuli. The experiment succeeds. Within two weeks the vicious Alex automatically associates all thoughts of violence with terrifying, painful, physical and emotional experiences. He is no longer capable of even fantasizing the violence of his past.

When the doctor in charge displays the “new Alex” the prison chaplain asks: “He ceases . . . to be a creature capable of moral choice?” The doctor replies: “These are subtleties. We are not concerned with motive, with higher ethics . . . only with cutting down crime.”¹⁶ The chaplain elsewhere replies: “When a man cannot choose he ceases to be a man.”¹⁷

Lest we imagine that *A Clockwork Orange* is simply theoretical we need only cite the words of Professor James McConnell of the University of Michigan, a Skinner disciple: “The day has come when we can combine sensory deprivation with drugs, hypnosis and astute manipulation of reward and punishment to gain absolute control over an individual’s behavior.”¹⁸ Why institute such conditioning? “To learn how to force people to learn to love one another, to force them to want to behave properly.”¹⁹

Such technological messianism may invite consent, especially when we feel plagued by the fruits of human failure. Would it not be tempting to reshape man into a creature incapable of imaginatively devising evil? But ours is a human adventure precisely because man has been given great power and freedom. Remove man’s freedom and one is left, not with persons but with oranges, organic yes, but functioning like clockwork.

The root of man’s dangerousness is the root of his dignity. Hence, the Rabbis, in a brilliant paradox, can suggest that even God called the evil impulse good. “Were it not for the *yezer hara*,” they said, “no man would build a house, take a wife and beget children . . .”²⁰ Man, the creature, uniquely conscious of his power to defy God’s purposes, is summoned to redirect and harness his power and his temptation in the service of God.

We have outlined two ways in which the aggadah challenges the Skinner scenario. (1) Man’s freedom is not an illusion but a self-conscious power to do good or evil. (2) Man’s dignity requires that he remain a covenant partner who is capable of saying “no” to his creator. His power to say “no” renders his “yes” all the more significant. Modernity juxtaposes two symbols, the “Skinner Box” and the Covenant. The one assumes that man is essentially no freer than other animals and makes the ritual of conditioning the key to salvation. The other regards man as a creature uniquely endowed with power and freedom. Man hears the divine call. He heeds and defies it, acknowledges responsibility (guilt) and is capable of self-renewal. God wants to be served by a

16 Anthony Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1965), p. 126.

17. Ibid., p. 84.

18. James V. McConnell, “Criminals Can Be Brainwashed Now,” *Psychology Today* (April 1970).

19. Ibid.

20. *Bereshit Rabbah* 9:7.

creature capable of defying Him. No technological short cuts to redemption are acceptable which undermine man's essential freedom and dignity even if we must face the prospect of confessing our guilt, seeking forgiveness and celebrating our power of repentance for many years to come.

The technological possibility of reshaping man's moral nature is part of a broader issue: Should man use his recently gained and growing knowledge of genetics to reshape the "native endowment" of the human species? Suppose genetic surgery could correct sub-normal intelligence or prevent a "birth defect?" Suppose we could effectively breed a different and superior geno-type? Even this latter possibility is hardly academic. Rand Corporation predicts that by the year 2005 an asexual form of reproduction called cloning may be feasible.²¹ This procedure would enable us to program in advance the genetic endowments of human beings and create multiple copies.

The responsible use of man's power may not rule out all genetic surgery. As in conventional surgery, such procedures may constitute a partnership with God in fulfilling the intended promise of creation. The scientist-technician is practicing a religious vocation when he acknowledges his power as the gift of God and employs it with accountability. One must always ask: Is the risk of harm proportionate to the hope of benefit to the individual?

When the genetic frontiersman begins to talk about radically reshaping man in a predetermined image the questions become more awesome: Do we have enough wisdom to know which genetic traits are good or bad for the human adventure? Are there not many unknown variables? Is not the damage we may do irreversible?

The promethean mood of some genetic frontiersmen suggests the admonition embodied in the Rabbinic play on the words *ur'du* (have dominion) and *yardu* (they shall descend). God says to man: if you use the power I give you responsibly, then *ur'du*, have dominion! If you abuse it, *yardu*, let man descend from his special place in creation.²²

On the issue of genetic engineering. Hans Jonas has made a significant distinction between reversible and irreversible intrusions upon human nature. He notes that attempts to reshape man through conventional education are fallible but at least reversible, whereas the genetic remaking of man in some image or assortment of images based on the values of a contemporary elite would alter with fateful finality the future of the human species. Jonas ends his plea with a contemporary aggadah:

We have not been authorized . . . to be makers of a new image (of man)

21. Paul Ramsey, *Fabricated Man—The Ethics of Genetic Control* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 106.

22. *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:12.

nor can we claim the wisdom and knowledge to arrogate that role. If there is any truth in man's being created in the image of God then awe and reverence and, yes, utter fear and ultimate metaphysical shudder ought to prevent us from meddling with the profound secret of what is man.²³

The reference above to scientists as a contemporary elite suggests a third contrast between modernity and tradition's view of human nature. Biblical messianism contends that before "the end of days" there remains a radical disjuncture between power and righteousness. Those in authority lie under the temptation to abuse power and, normally, succumb. Before the dawn of the Messiah the prophetic spirit must speak truth to power. In the interim, no king is immune to the temptations of power.

From time to time, men mistakenly suppose that by virtue of birth or intellectual gifts a certain group of individuals may transcend man's ambiguous relation to power. In our own age, the scientist-technologist-engineer, with his commitment to dispassionate truth, has been lifted by some to the pedestal of moral immunity. This notion is contrary, not only to the Biblical doctrine of power, but contrasts sharply with the Rabbinic understanding of such matters. Abaya said that the evil *yezer* is strongest against scholars. He proceeds to relate an incident. He overheard a man and woman speak of journeying together. Abaya resolved to follow them "in order to keep them from transgression." He did so, only to discover that they parted company without having fulfilled his fantasies. Abaya confessed to himself, "If it were I, I could not have restrained myself." This realization depressed him, whereupon a certain old man (Elijah) came up to him and said: "The greater the man the greater is his evil inclination."²⁴

Neither Rabbinic nor scientific wisdom renders one immune to the temptations of power. Indeed, the candor of a scientific Nobel laureate has confirmed that science is a human enterprise with political overtones. James Watson, who shared the Nobel prize for his work on the structure of DNA (the molecule of heredity), published a breezy account of that research project under the title "The Double Helix." There he records that one of the most joyous moments in the life of his research team occurred when they learned that Linus Pauling, a research competitor, had apparently followed a deadend!²⁵

Infinitely more sobering, of course, is the fact that some of the most vicious experiments on human beings in Nazi Germany were conducted by men with Ph.D's. In an age of technology, no less than in the time of the Bible and the Talmud, all men remain subject to the temptations of evil. Intelligence is no guarantee of moral purity. We

23. D. J. Silver, ed., *Judaism and Ethics* (New York: KTAV, 1970), p. 47.

24. Babylonian Talmud, *Sukkah* 52a.

25. James Watson, *The Double Helix* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), chap. 22.

have not outgrown the traditional concept: the greater the man the greater his power to do good or evil.

In its image of man's nature, the tradition confronts the secular world with three ringing affirmations. (1) Man is free. (2) His freedom and dignity include the power to enhance or betray his covenant. (There can be no freedom to do good without the power to think and do evil.) (3) In pre-Messianic days, before the *yezer* has been fully tamed, virtue remains not only an achievement but a struggle from which *no* person is immune. Hence, we must confront our technological messianists with the question: Who will control the controllers?

III

The covenant view of man's power and limits makes this additional assertion. To be human is to be mortal and to acknowledge that death is part of life. After Adam had eaten of the Tree of Knowledge, God says:

Now that man has become like one of us knowing good and evil what if he should stretch out his hand and take also from the Tree of Life and eat and live forever? So the Lord God banished him from the Garden to till the soil from which he was taken. He drove the man out and stationed east of the Garden of Eden the cherubim and the fiery, overturning sword to guard the way to the Tree of Life (Gen. 3:22 ff).

Death is the boundary, the ultimate limit which compels man to admit he is not God. As God's covenant partner, man is summoned to share with his creator the task of reshaping the world, but he also lives uniquely with the anticipation of incompleteness and death.

When the Lord created Adam the Angels mistook him for a divine being. What did the Holy One Blessed Be He do? He caused a sleep to fall upon Adam and all knew that he was but mortal man. Thus it is written, "Cease ye from man in whose nostrils is the breath, for how little is he to be accounted?" (Is. 2:22).²⁶

Although Adam's death is also regarded as punishment for his disobedience, both the Bible and Rabbinic literature regard death—apart from Adam's sin—as man's encounter with his own creatureliness.

Rabbi Hamma: "The first man was not worthy of death. Why was death decreed upon him? The Holy One Blessed Be He saw that Nebuchadnezzar and Hiram would in the future regard themselves as divine. Therefore, death was decreed upon Adam and upon all men."²⁷

When the angels ask for an extension of Moses' life, they are told that death is "a decree which applies equally to all men," and when Moses, himself, entreats God to spare him on account of his righteousness God says, "For all creatures death has been prepared from the beginning."²⁸

26. *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:9.

27. *Bereshit Rabbah* 9:5.

28. *Sifra* 141a; *Tanḥuma B., va'etḥanan*, 6a.

Secular man may chafe at the image of a transcendent creator but he may not ignore the reality of his own finitude. Even the man who celebrates or mourns the "Death of God" anticipates with far more certainty his own demise.

Ever since the Garden of Eden, man has fantasied ways by which he might outwit the Angel of Death. That fantasy has not left us. There are those who actively provide for the freezing of their corpses until such time as men have technologically transcended death.

Medical technology has already demonstrated the power to extend the average life span and to stay the hand of death. Oxygen may be fed directly to the lung, chemical nutrients to the veins, catheters inserted into disabled organs. Nevertheless, artificial support systems appear often to be prolonging death rather than extending life. Significantly, our culture has begun to reclaim the traditional concept that death is part of life. Out of our love for man we must ask, not only how to extend life, but how we may help persons die with dignity.

The fantasy of deathlessness persists, nonetheless. Professor Gerald Feinberg believes that as long as man lives with a sense of death, he can never be contented, and concludes, "therefore I believe that a transformation of man into something very different than what he is now is called for . . ." ²⁹ The professor envisages the creation of new beings, perhaps conscious machines who would not confront the limit of mortality. But would these creatures be human? The professor himself replies that they may be "humans, Martians, dolphins, or IBM 137,000." ³⁰

We may speculate on the impact of artificial organs or conscious machines on the concept of death, but, as Feinberg himself implies, temporality is the price of our humanity. An ageless person is a contradiction in terms. We used to say that the only alternative to aging is premature death. Even at best (or worst), technology may compel us to acknowledge that the alternative to aging and death is the loss of that mysterious and awesome complexity which we call our humanity.

All of which brings us back to the declaration of the ancient Psalmist that our years are

. . . like grass . . . in the morning it flourishes and groweth up and in the evening it is cut down and withereth. . . . We bring our years to an end as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten or even by reason of strength, fourscore years. . . . Teach us to number our days that we may get us a heart of wisdom (Ps. 90).

Death is the price of human life. The consciousness of death is the mark of our personhood.

At the grave of a loved one we are bidden to recite,

Praised Be Thou, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who dost form

29. In Ramsey, *Op. cit.*, p. 155.

30 Ibid., p. 159.

us in Thine image, who dost nourish and sustain us in Thy goodness, who causes us to die in accordance with Thy law and who hast implanted within us eternal life. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Judge of Truth."

George Orwell said that the major problem of our time is the erosion of belief in personal immortality. Not coincidentally, our culture has also made of death the new pornography. We find it easier to speak of sex than to talk of the end of our days. For all our bravado, we do not truly expect to outwit the Angel of Death, but we crave to deny our nothingness in a culture where images of human abidingness beyond the grave no longer seem intellectually or emotionally compelling.

Covenant man acknowledged that death is part of human life and turned to God as the Guardian of Eternity. Whether we be believers, unbelievers, or confirmed agnostics we, too, must accept death as the end of our earthly pilgrimage. For transcendent hope we, too, must turn, not to technology, with its fantasies of larger or better artificial support systems or a pill of eternal youth, but to the infinite God, Who has summoned us to life and Who quickens our dust.

Even in a secular age, an irrepressible longing for abidingness persists, as do lingering intimations of our spirit transcending dust. No modern writer has chronicled the yearning and the intimations more movingly than Saul Bellow in *Mr. Sammler's Planet*. The old man, Sammler, stands at the deathbed of his younger nephew and benefactor, Elya Gruner. Sammler wonders about the destiny of man and muses,

Is God only the gossip of the living? Then we watch these living speed like birds over the surface of the water and one will dive or plunge but not come up again, never be seen anymore . . . but then we have no proof that there is no depth under the surface.³¹

Later, Sammler says, "consolers cannot always be truthful but very often and almost daily I have strong impressions of eternity. This may be due to my strange experiences or to old age. I will say that to me this does not feel elderly."³² When his nephew expires, Sammler approaches the bed and recites a version of the *El maleh rahamim*, "remember, God, the soul of Elya Gruner."³³

In age of technology, as in the age of the Bible, man remains a meaning-seeking creature called to covenant with a value-sustaining power greater than himself. Death remains for us, as for our fathers, the supreme reminder that we are junior partners in the covenant of life. We yearn for an ultimate validation of our lives which may be bestowed only by the ultimate source of our being. We have not outgrown the confession of the Psalmist (Ps. 39) "Lord, let me know my end . . . how fleeting my life is. . . Surely every man stands as a mere breath. . . And now . . . for what do I wait? My hope is in Thee."

31. Saul Bellow, *Mr. Sammler's Planet* (New York: Viking, 1969), p. 236.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 237.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 313.

Women in a Prayer Quorum

PHILLIP SIGAL

I

IN HIS BOOK, *Jewish Worship*, ABRAHAM Millgram relates the story of Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia. Only seventeen Jews, seven men and ten women, have survived the Nazi "final solution." They continue to hold Sabbath and Festival worship and a spokesman of that remnant told Millgram that they continued those services "even though we do not have a minyan." Their hope is that one day more Jews will settle there and, so, they feel a deep obligation to preserve a viable synagogue which dates back to Roman times. Millgram then asks: "Should such communities be granted official permission to revert to the ancient Palestinian practice?" One view, expressed in a medieval compilation, *Soferim*, maintained that, in Palestine, seven, and even six, were sufficient for a public quorum.¹ Millgram asks further, "Or should they act independently as do the Jews of Dubrovnik?" By this is meant, should such communities which do not possess the traditional quorum, the minyan of ten males, pray without a minyan *as if* there were a minyan?² What does not seem to occur to Millgram is to ask a third question: Should such communities (if not all) count the women?

We live in a radically changing world, and foremost among the transformations taking place is that of the status of women. The equalization of women with men has been progressing at an accelerating pace in recent years in various phases of the socio-economic context of society, as well as in new attitudes toward women in the sexual-moral sphere. Over the years, the Reform and Conservative Movements in Judaism have introduced a variety of ritual and liturgical revisions that have made the position of women more rational and more closely approximating that of men. The Reform Movement has seen the ordination of its first female Rabbi. In the Conservative Movement, on the other hand, although the rights of a woman to sing in a choir, to lead services, to be called to the Torah, or to receive an annulment of her marriage if her recalcitrant civilly-divorced husband refuses to offer her a Jewish divorce, have been normalized, the question of her being counted as part of the prayer quorum is not yet definitive. The Rabbinical Assembly Committee on Jewish Law and Standards has decided that to include women in the minyan is not a violation of the Preamble to

1. Tractate *Soferim* 10:8.

2. Abraham Millgram, *Jewish Worship* (Philadelphia: Jewish Pub. Soc., 1971), p. 343f.

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the Constitution of the United Synagogue, which requires congregations to remain loyal to "tradition"—an undefined term. But in this negative posture, it did not arrive at the conclusion that asseverates that women *should* be included as of right.*

Furthermore, it is imperative that we see this in a comprehensive halakhic context. This should not imply that only one view has validity. In the halakhah, a permissive conclusion does not invalidate the right to be *maḥmir*, to accept a greater stringency upon oneself, to fulfill *lifnim meshurat ha'din*, to accept an observance that goes beyond the requirement of the precise limits of the halakhah. But it is one thing to refuse personally to participate where women are included in a prayer quorum out of one's personal conviction, or because one is *maḥmir*. It is quite another thing to insist that everyone else conform to that standard, to argue that women must not be included as part of the ten who make up a public prayer quorum.

This essay will, therefore, show that, in Judaism, public worship is a mandatory requirement of high priority, for women as well as men, and that for valid public worship to take place there is a specific requirement of a "community" of worshippers numbering no less than ten, and that on the basis of the attitude of the *halakhah* toward women in liturgical and other ritual matters there is adequate precedent for modifying the existing *minhag* of not counting women as part of the prayer quorum.

II

Public worship is mandatory in Judaism despite all modern speculation to the contrary. This unquestionable requirement is quite specifically stated, not merely in a large variety of philosophical or aggadic passages which might occasionally be contradicted or not taken at face value, but, more to the point, in the halakhic passages of the Talmud. Furthermore, the mandatory nature of public worship was accepted in subsequent halakhic compilations with uninterrupted unanimity.

The requirement of public worship is stated lucidly in the Babylonian Talmud where we read "a person's *tefilah* (prayer) is listened to (by God) only in the Synagogue." R. Akiva Eger, the 18th century scholar of Posen, noted, in a marginal gloss, the variant reading "that a person's prayer is listened to *only* in a *Zibbur*," prayer is listened to when it is recited in a public quorum, in a congregation. This view is fortified several pages later where we read that the favorable moment of prayer is "when the community (*Zibbur*) worship." A parallel

*The author's responsum on this question was instrumental in a vote being taken by the Rabbinical Assembly Law Committee on August 29, 1973 (after preparation of this article) to approve formally the inclusion of women in a minyan.

emphasis was placed upon praying at the *same hour* as a quorum if one cannot be present at the Synagogue.³

The Talmudic view was cogently reformulated by Moses Maimonides in his *Mishneh Torah*. Furthermore, he stated that public worship consists of one praying aloud with the congregation listening, this "congregation" being constituted of no less than ten free persons who have reached the age of religious majority. The basic explanation for the significance of public worship over private devotions was summarized by Maimonides when he wrote "for even if there were sinners among them, God would not despise the prayer of the group." In other words, collective virtue will outweigh individual inadequacy.⁴ As a matter of fact, the halakhic tradition branded one who does not join in public worship as an "evil neighbor" who is to be shunned by a pious Jew.⁵ It is clear that public worship is not a mere option in the halakhah but a mandatory requirement.⁶

The cursory review of the question establishes the premise that public worship is regarded as a *sine qua non* of the Jewish religion. R. Joel Sirkes (1561-1640), author of *Bayit Hadash*, a commentary on R. Jacob b. Asher's *Turim*, ruled that Jews can be compelled to attend

3. PS. 69:14. Babylonian *Berakhot* 6 a, 8 a. See Gilyon *ha'Shas* on the text. Cf. B. *Avodah Zarah* 4 b. *Tosafot*, passage beginning *Keevan*. See R. Asher b. Jacob, the *Rosh*, on *Berakhot*, Chapter one, Section 7, p. 3a and *Divrei Hamudot* (by Yom Tov Lipman Heller) on the *Rosh*, note 26.

Elijah of Vilna drew to our attention that both Alfasi and R. Asher ben Jacob included the proposition that "a person's tefilah is not listened to except in the Synagogue" because of the verse "the favorable moment is when the community worships." The 16th-17th century R. Yom Tov Lipman Heller, commenting on the words of R. Asher, noted that his son, R. Jacob, author of *Tur*, interpreted the term "synagogue" to mean "congregation," accenting the presence of a quorum rather than a location. Nevertheless, as he added, in the view of Gaonim, the importance of the quorum-concept is so great that even if a quorum is not physically present, a person should pray in a Synagogue since that is the usual locale of a quorum.

4. Moses Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot Tefilah* 8:1, 4. Cf. Mishnah *Megillah* 4:3, and the Babylonian Talmud 23 b. See also R. Joseph Karo, *Shulhan Arukh Oraḥ Hayyim* 55:1.

5. B. *Berakhot* 8 a, Maimonides, *loc. cit.*; *Avot* 1:7.

6. Actually, this idea was taken so seriously that it was used as a basis for negating the general principle that *mizvah ha'ba'ah b'averah*, a *mizvah* which results from a transgression is not a *mizvah*: Thus, R. Eliezer freed his gentile slave, contrary to the Torah halakhah, so that he might serve as the tenth member of a minyan. Normally, this would not be considered a *mizvah* because it ran counter to the Torah (Lev. 25-46), but, in this case, it was deemed meritorious because the Talmud held *mizvah d'rabim shani*, "a public *mizvah* is different." In other words, the requirement of public worship is so vital, that to help the public fulfill this significant requirement one may even violate the Torah to be able to conduct it. R. Asher commented that *d'alim aseḥ d'rabim*, a public *mizvah* is even stronger than the individual's obligation to a verse in the Torah.

See B. *Berakhot* 47 b; R. Asher on *Berakhot*, Chapter 7, Section 20. The importance of public worship was one of the factors that influenced the Rabbinical Assembly to permit travel to the Synagogue on the Sabbath, as can be seen in the Sabbath Responsum of 1950.

Synagogue worship on pain of fines, in order to assure the prayer quorum, which was also the ruling of Moses Isserles.⁷ The task is to define precisely of what a quorum was understood to consist. From that point we can proceed to examine the status of women.

In the Babylonian Talmud we read that all passages of *kedushah* in prayer, all passages that fit under the rubric of "holiness-passages" may be said only if a quorum of *ten* is present. As delineated, this meant the shema segment of the liturgy, the Torah reading, the haftorah, the kaddish, *kedushah* and the public recitation of the *amidah*, among other things. The need to say the mourners' kaddish in public quorum arose only in later centuries when it became one of the regular "holiness-passages."⁸

Why was the number "ten" seized upon? We read in the Babylonian Talmud that the number "ten" is derived from a *gezerah shavah*, a term which means a decision based upon the likeness of two parts or, more tersely stated, "an analogy of expression."⁹ The analogy is taken through several separate stages and is dealt with somewhat differently and not always lucidly.¹⁰

7. *Bayit Hadash* on *Orah Hayyim* 150. Cf. Moses Isserles on *Shulhan Arukh*, *Orah Hayyim* 15:22.

8. B. *Berakhot* 21 b, *Megillah* 23 b. The Talmud makes no mention of the ten to consist of males specifically. But Joseph Karo, in his *Shulhan Arukh Orah Hayyim* 55:1 where he also introduced the need for a quorum for kaddish, added the requirement that the ten be males. Naturally, he did not originate the idea. It came down in the discussions of the Scholars from the early middle ages on, as will be indicated later in this essay. But Maimonides did not specify "males." See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah Hilkhhot Tefilah* 8:4, 5, 6. Cf. Mordecai on *Berakhot* 21 b, note 69.

9. For an exposition of *gezerah shavah* see Moses Mielziner, *Introduction To The Talmud*, p. 142 ff.

10. The Scriptural sources involved in this are Leviticus 22:32, and Numbers 16:21, 14:27. The *gezerah shavah* is expounded in B. *Berakhot* 21 b and *Megillah* 23 b. This *gezerah shavah* as expounded in the Babylonian Talmud is somewhat less than adequate.

It is pointed out that Leviticus 22:32 uses the term *tokh* in stating that God will be sanctified *b'tokh*, in the midst of Israel, and Numbers 16:21 uses the same term, *tokh*, when referring to Korah and his fellow mutineers when God tells Moses and Aaron to separate themselves *m'tokh*, from the midst of that *edah*, the assemblage, in order that He may destroy it. The term *tokh*, therefore, becomes the subject of analogy. The second step is then propounded. The term *edah*, "assembly," is taken to signify *ten*, but this is where the *gezerah shavah* falters. The assessment of *edah* in Numbers 16:21 to be ten is erroneous, and this error on the part of the Talmud is naturally puzzling, for Numbers 16:21 refers to Korah and his associates, who numbered over 250.

The *gezerah shavah* is then taken into its second stage, where we are told that the minimum number of *edah* is *ten* because in Numbers 14:27, where God deplored "the wicked *edah*" he was referring to the ten spies whom Moses had sent to Canaan and who returned to discourage Israel from proceeding with the conquest and thereby set in motion a disastrous mutiny. In reality, however, that verse refers to *all* Israel! In the light of this analysis, the *gezerah shavah* designed to establish *ten* as a public worship quorum might be regarded as inadequate. (On the other hand, Rabbi Robert Gordis, in a communication to the author, sees *malinim* in Numbers 14:27 as possibly causative, and, therefore, might refer to the ten spies.) If the Babylonian Amoraim

Logic also supports the analogy to determine the public prayer quorum at ten. There were ten spies who brought calamity upon the *edah*, the community; consequently, ten praying people, exercising their fund of collective virtue, were regarded as competent to bring salvation to an *edah*. As a matter of fact, we read in Midrashic literature that ten persons have the power to prevent adversity.¹¹ There the reference is related to the story of Abraham pleading for the salvation of Sodom and Amorah where God was willing to spare the towns if a minimum of ten worthy people were to be found.

Despite the ups and downs of the nature of support rendered, it is clear that the halakhic tradition, from the outset, defined "public worship" as being constituted of ten persons. Tannaitic literature delineated the liturgical series which required such a quorum. Maimonides asserted that this means nine persons plus the leader. That these ten people had to be males was not explicitly stated. It may have been an assumption, at first, in the light of women's exemption from certain *mizvot*. But this cannot be stated unequivocally. Only in the *Shulhan Arukh* was the term "males" specified when the halakhah of ten was noted.¹²

IV

We have now reviewed key sources which indicate that public worship, or worship-in-community is mandatory, and that a "community" of a prayer quorum is ten persons.

We must now raise the general consideration of the role of women in the liturgy. First, we must establish that women are obligated to pray. For if they are not obligated to pray, we could neither urge their attendance nor expect them to participate. Furthermore, if they are not bona-fide worshippers, there would be no grounds to count them in a quorum to legitimize worship for others, since if one is not obligated he cannot serve as the instrument that enables others to fulfill their obligation.

did not adequately explain the Tannaitic innovation, the *gezerah shavah* is redeemed in the Palestinian Talmud. (*Megillah* 75 b, *Berakhot* 11 c.) There we are first given the erroneous one based on the term *edah*, "assembly," used in Numbers 14:27 and 16:21, neither one of which refers to "ten," the former referring to the 250 of Korah and the latter to all Israel. But, then, an analogy is offered between Leviticus 22:32 and Genesis 42:5. In the latter passage, we have reference to Jacob's *ten* sons coming *b'tokh*, among all the other purchasers of grain in Egypt, and in the former that God is to be sanctified *b'tokh*, in the midst of Israel. There, in Genesis 42:5, the Israelites are "ten" and, so, the minimum for "Israel" in Leviticus 22:32 is defined as ten.

11. Midrash *Tanhumah va'yera* 8. Cf. Genesis 18:32. In *Tanhumah*, we read that ten can save from *pooraniyut*, from "adversity." That is the correct meaning of the term, as it is seen in the context of the standard *tefilah la'derekh*, the prayer one recites before taking a journey, and how it should be understood in *Avot* 1:7 rather than as "retribution."

12. Mishnah *Megillah* 4:3; Maimonides, *Hilkhot Tefilah* 8:4, *Shulhan Arukh Oraḥ Hayyim* 55:1.

We will find, however, that the halakhah clearly established the obligation of women to participate in public worship.¹³

There are differences of opinion among medieval scholars whether the obligation for a woman to pray is Torahitic or Rabbinic, but there is unanimity on the idea that it is an obligation and that women are not excused on the basis of prayer being a *mizvat aseih she'ha'zman gramah*, a *mizvah* determined by a time factor, which must be conducted at a specific time.¹⁴

It has to be assumed that this obligation, stated by the Mishnah and reiterated in the Talmud and in halakhic writings, was understood to apply to public worship or their exemption would have been noted. Furthermore, it is evident that the halakhah took it for granted that the women were in the place of worship and, therefore, could consider whether or not to use them when needed. When the Talmud informs us that women can be one of the seven that ascend to the Torah or that they can sound the shofar, it is evident that they were in the place of public worship. And they were there because they were obligated equally with men. In his inimical conservative style, Maimonides omitted the right of women to ascend to the Torah and merely cited the end of the rabbinic statement, that women do not read the Torah in public because the honor of the community is at stake.¹⁵

R. Isaac Alfasi (11th century) cited the beraita that women may be included in the seven called to the Torah and R. Nissim conceded that "now" (the 14th century), when each person called to the Torah says his own blessing, women can say the blessing when called to the Torah, although, originally they were never called first or last when the opening and closing blessings had to be said. Whether the limitation of the ratio of women would today be any more justified than the limitation which

13. Mishnah *Rosh ha'Shanah* 3:8; Babylonian R.H. 29 a; Mishnah *Berakhot* 3:3; B. *Berakhot* 20 b; Maimonides *Mishneh Torah Hilkhoh Tefilah* 1:2, 6:10; *Shulhan Arukh Oraḥ Hayyim* 106:2.

14. See Maimonides *Op. cit.* 1:1. *Tosafot Berakhot* 20 b, passage beginning *b'tefilah*. Cf. Psalm 55:18. B. *Kiddushin* 29 a. B. *Sukkah* 38 a. The Talmud declares that prayer is not in this category of *mizvah* from which women are exempt, despite the Psalmist's reference to prayer at night, morning and noon. Rashi further elucidates that prayer is Rabbinic *mizvah* and the Rabbis instituted it equally for women, although Hallel, which is recited only at specified occasions, is so considered and women are, therefore, exempt from reciting Hallel.

Actually, the whole question of a *mizvat aseih she'ha'zman gramah*, a *mizvah* determined by a specific time, is under an ambiguity which defies absolute definition. Even Maimonides was not sufficiently lucid in his various attempts to define it, and classical halakhic literature offers examples rather than a definition. But there is unanimity in all the sources for the obligation of women to engage in daily prayer.

Maimonides, *Perush haMishnayot* on the first chapter of Mishnah *Kiddushin*. The passages from 20 a through 35 a. Cf also his *Hilkhoh Avodat hakohavim* 12:3.

15. *Tosefta Megillah* 3:5, B. *Megillah* 23a, B. *Rosh ha'Shanah* 33a. Maimonides, *Hilkhoh Tefilah* 12:7. Cf. *Shulhan Arukh Oraḥ Hayyim* 282:3. In 12:3 Maimonides specifies that we require ten males as a quorum for Torah Reading.

denied them first or last place previously and was later changed, is open to question.¹⁶ Despite this participation of women in the Torah service, however, Karo prohibited them from being included in the prayer quorum.¹⁷

Furthermore, on the question of whether a woman may be included in the mandatory quorum for the public reading of the Scroll of Esther on Purim, Moses Isserles (16th century) cautiously raised that possibility in the light of differences expressed in previous centuries. Referring back to opinions cited in Jacob ben Asher's *Tur*, Isserles speculates that when a woman participated in the quorum for the reading of the Megillah it was a correct quorum for the town.¹⁸ But even more explicit was the 13th century Mordecai who cited an earlier scholar, R. Simḥah (probably the compiler of *Maḥzor Vitry*), that a woman may be included in the minyan for prayer and when ten are required for grace after meals for purposes of including the name of God in the formula.¹⁹

The status of *mamzer*, the product of an adulterous or incestuous sexual relationship, of the Karaite and of the slave, might be of some interest in relationship to that of woman. It would appear that a woman was either beneath them or no better than these classes of disqualified Jews. Certainly contemporary halakhah should avoid such an anomaly.²⁰ As a matter of fact, not to recognize a woman's right to constitute part of the worship quorum is to place her in the same category as a Karaite who was barred by Maimonides from being included in the quorum.²¹ It might be of interest to extend the view of Asher (in his compendium on Babylonian *Berakhot*), regarding a slave, to a woman. There, R. Asher suggested that anyone who is under the obligation of

16. R. Isaac of Fez (Alfasi) on *Megillah* 23a and R. Nissim on the text, passage beginning *ha'kol olin*.

17. R. Joseph Karo, *Shulḥan Arukh Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 55:4. See *Bi'yur ha'Gra* (the notes of Gaon R. Elijah) on the text, beginning *V'eesha*. The 18th century Elijah of Vilna comments on Karo's text saying, "A woman's status is always like that of a slave." We might argue that since a manumitted slave can be used in a minyan, a woman who is always free can be considered as a manumitted slave.

18. Karo, *Shulḥan Arukh Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 690:18, and Isserles' note thereon. See also, R. Abraham Gumbiner (17th century) *Magen Avraham*, note 24 and *Maḥazit-ha'shekel* thereon.

19. Mordecai on *Berakhot*, note 173.

20. Moses Isserles on *Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 282:3, and Elijah of Vilna's comment, passage beginning *u'mamzer*. Cf. Babylonian *Horayot* 13a and *Sefer ha'Hinukh*, miṣvah 560.

In connection with the ritual of Sabbath Torah reading, Moses Isserles indicated that a mamzer may be called to the Torah. On that text, Elijah of Vilna explained that a mamzer is regarded as a full Jew for all purposes (except marriage to a non-mamzer fellow-Jew). This would, incidentally, also mean that a mamzer is eligible to be counted as part of a minyan. Certainly, if, as is stated in the Talmud, a mamzer who is a scholar takes precedence over a high priest who is not, it becomes quite clear that his rights are assured. And, as a matter of fact, the tradition explicitly asserted that the only disability the mamzer suffered was in the matter of marriage.

21. A responsum cited by R. Gedaliah Felder, *Yesodei Yeshurum* Vol. I, p. 56.

mizvot, including a circumcised slave, can be included in a minyan, for any such person is subsumed under the verse in Leviticus 22:32 which says that God will be “sanctified in the midst of Israel.” In accord with the view expressed on the text by R. Yom Tov Lipman Heller, that a woman is equated with a slave in ritual matters, this would imply that a woman, like a slave, obligated to mizvot, may be included among those in whose midst God is sanctified. Above all, in respect to the specific question of public worship, a woman is obligated, and, hence, is entitled to be part of the quorum.²² R. Asher supported this idea when he argued that although a person who is not obligated to a certain mizvah cannot be a *mozi*, cannot enable others to fulfill that mizvah, nevertheless, a woman may be called to the Torah as one of the congregation’s mandated seven, thus enabling the public to fulfill its obligation, although she is not obligated to study it, because the blessing she recites is not for its study, but for the Election of Israel and the Revelation. How much more so, if she is obligated to public worship she can count in the quorum to enable a congregation to fulfill its obligation of public worship.²³

Women were permitted to perform ritual slaughter and they were permitted to read the Megillah of Esther on Purim for the public. These rights follow naturally the reasoning of R. Asher, cited previously, that, since they were obligated to observe the mizvah of kashrut or of hearing the Megillah they could enable the public to fulfill its obligation. Maimonides, after first stating that a woman is obligated, has asserted that as long as one hears the Megillah read by one who is obligated, he fulfills the mizvah. The same reasoning would logically imply that since a woman is obligated to public worship, one can fulfill his public worship obligation in a quorum which is constituted of both men and women. Lest anyone doubt that a woman’s right to read the Megillah follows from the fact of her obligation, this is explicitly stated by Joseph Karo in his commentary on Maimonides.²⁴

V

From the foregoing, it is clear that public worship in a community of ten persons is a mandatory mizvah of high priority in Judaism. It is evident in the halakhah that women are obligated to it equally with men. Various segments of the halakhah give women the right equally

22. R. Asher on *Berakhot* 48a, Section 20, and R. Yom Tov Lipman Heller in *Divrei Hamudot*, note 53. Heller, however, arrives at a reverse conclusion from that which logic would dictate. R. Tam said that the halakhah is according to R. Joshua b. Levi that a slave counts, and Heller says that, nevertheless, R. Tam did not practice it. The same could be true of woman: she should count, but it was not practiced.

23. B. *Rosh ha'Shanah* 29a, R. Asher, *loc. cit.*

24. Mishnah *Hulin* 1:1. See *Tosafot* there, first passage on B. *Hulin* 2a. Mishnah *Megillah* 2:2, Maimonides, *Hilkhot Megillah* 1:2, 1:1, and the *Kesef Mishnah* on 1:2. Cf. also *Hagahot Maimuniyot*, note 1.

with men to participate publicly in a wide variety of rituals and, therefore, to enable the public to fulfill its obligation. Furthermore, a number of categories of persons who suffer from certain halakhic restrictions or disabilities, such as a mamzer, may be counted in a minyan. Persons excluded from qualifying for a quorum are minors or Karaites and there is even a degree of controversy over minors. To disqualify women from sharing in the right to constitute an assembly or a worship community is to offend them without reason. Even if we categorize the disqualification of women to constitute a quorum as *minhag*, it is a minhag which has lost its reason and its appeal. It is a minhag which often runs counter to the best interests of Jewish communities, especially the small ones, not only on Friday nights but on Saturday mornings, at daily services and in houses of *shivah*. When a minhag is no longer of spiritual benefit it may be modified or abolished. Although Moses Isserles was firm about preserving a minhag, he held that when "circumstances change" the minhag may be modified to suit current standards. In the sources referred to we find that the commentators hold that the strength of minhag obtains where there is some support for it in the Torah. But where there is no support for it in the Torah, to preserve an obsolete minhag is merely "to err in logic," or, in their words, to be *toeh b'shikul ha'da'at*.²⁵

In the light of all of these considerations:—that a woman is obligated to public worship; that when one is obligated, one can contribute to the public's fulfilling its obligation; in order to remove the stigma of a woman not even enjoying the ritual status of a mamzer who may be counted in a minyan; and not to classify her with a Karaite who may not be counted—it would appear that the time has come to declare that women may help constitute a community of worshippers in order to fulfill the great mizvah of public worship.

25. Cf. *Magen Avraham*, note 22, and *B'er Hetev*, note 15, on Karo's *Orah Hayyim*, 690:17, and their citation of a responsum by Moses Isserles on the matter.

Re-appraising Maimonides

H. JOEL LAKS

THERE HAS BEEN A REMARKABLE UPSURGE OF interest in theology in our day. The trenchant criticisms leveled by post-Hegelian philosophers such as Feuerbach, Bruno Bauer, and Karl Marx, the savagely incisive attacks of Nietzsche, and the relatively low-keyed asseverations of latter-day exponents of empiricism such as Russell and Ayer have only brought about a penumbral eclipse of God. A new tack has emerged, focusing attention on man's perception of God as either transcendent or immanent in nature. In the light of the contemporary movement of religious thought a re-examination of our Judaic heritage is in order.

In the Pantheon of figures famed for their contributions to the development of Jewish thought, Maimonides occupies such an eminent niche that it has earned him the accolade that "from Moses to Moses there arose none like Moses."

Both as a leader as well as in terms of his intellectual contributions he stands astride Jewish history like a veritable colossus. Nevertheless, history has treated the work he has bequeathed to posterity with signal unevenness. His halakhic code, the Mishneh Torah, despite early criticism, and despite the lapse of eight centuries, stands today secure and solidly entrenched. No serious student of Jewish law would attempt to delve into the halakhah without referring to the Mishneh Torah, reflecting either on its judgments or its omissions.

This is not the case with regard to his other mighty opus, the *Dalalat Alha-irin*, the Guide to the Perplexed, which was greeted so enthusiastically when it first burst upon the scene, and was deemed to have attained the high water mark in medieval Jewish philosophic speculation. But any review of the modern literature assessing this work would lead, I believe, to the conclusion that it is dated, essentially a medieval work, and of little significance for our day. While it was unequalled in its day as a prime exemplar of efforts to expound Judaism, courageously fostering a spirit of synthesis with philosophic thought, nevertheless, the current evaluation is that it is inconsequential for the contemporary student of Jewish theology, and that its chief interest is for scholars and historians who value the apologetic literature of the past.

Ironically enough, one may argue that the Maimonidean influence has been far more lasting and deeply felt on the development of Christian,

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rather than Jewish, theology. The Guide was available to Thomas Aquinas, who incorporated its method of harmonizing reason and revelation in his authoritative statement of Catholicism, the *Summa Theologica*.

In rebuttal, it may be suggested that the new doctrine of Thirteen Principles of Faith advanced by Maimonides, accepted within the daily liturgy of the Jew, does reflect his lasting influence in moulding the attitudes and beliefs of Jewish religious thought. While serious thinkers may no longer give his work much consideration, the people at large have been enduringly affected by him.

Now, it is undoubtedly true that the Thirteen Principles which Maimonides formulated represent the result of deep meditations concerning Judaism. Nevertheless, they do not occur in the Guide but are the product of an earlier work, his Commentary to the Mishnah. They are appended to the tractate Sanhedrin, the chapter of *Helek*, which presents the deliberations of the Talmudic sages concerning those who have no *helek*, or portion, in the world-to-come.

This leads to my second point, a suggestion that one may distinguish between theology and what may be termed meta-religious principles. Meta-religion begins with a consideration of religious doctrines, proceeds by higher levels of abstraction and arrives at the most fundamental and most general doctrines. It is in this sense that Maimonides, in his Commentary, seems to be urging a select number of propositions dealing with the relation of God and the cosmos, the relation of God and man, prophecy and prayer, resurrection and the world-to-come. Their subsequent acceptance by Jewry rests, not so much on abstract theological doctrine, as on the same respect for the legal acumen of Maimonides which won acceptance in the general sphere of halakhah.

Theology, on the other hand, is a systematic presentation of doctrine which, while assimilating Scriptural and Talmudic teachings, yet seeks to incorporate them within a wider sphere of reference. It aims at overall consistency. Its appeal is to religious belief as well as to rational assent and conviction. It is not so much a derivation from a sacred text as an attempt to justify a particular view of that religion.

Thus, Maimonides' Guide deals with the problem of anthropomorphism with reference to God in Scripture, the nature of creation *ex nihilo*, ethical responsibility and the problem of the limits of free will in Scripture, the meaning of prophecy, the suffering and pain of the innocent, the nature of God, proofs of His existence, the Divine attributes, the notion of Providence and of causality and, finally, the role of *mizvah* in the spiritual economy of the Jew. In these reflections we find Maimonides' theological system which, though hailed so glowingly in his time, is generally dismissed today as archaic and irrelevant, a sort of intellectual relic with which the past is liberally littered.

Undoubtedly, an important reason for our tendency to by-pass

Maimonidean philosophy is the "medieval" framework in which it is cast. Problems such as the Divine attributes, as well as that of incorporeality, were of vital concern to medieval philosophers and to religious polemicists, but they are not of great moment to the contemporary seeker for religious clarification.

By contrast, the meditations of an earlier Jewish philosopher, Saadia, head of the Academy of Sura (circa 900 C.E.), appear more refreshingly contemporary. In his pathfinding *Emunot v'Deot* ("Beliefs and Doctrines") Saadia captures the attention of his audience with his query concerning evidence. Rhetorically, he asks: What are the sources of factual knowledge? How do we arrive at truth? We are immediately disarmed and eager to listen to his analysis, which is as relevant today as it was then. Approaching the Guide, however, we must slice through the trappings in order to harvest the rich layers of material lying invitingly underneath.

This is probably only a part of the explanation. Saadia's work, too, has suffered from indifference and neglect. There may very well be a fundamental aversion on the part of our people to theology as being too remote and abstract. Thus, where Aquinas has had the good fortune to be re-interpreted by contemporary philosophers such as Etienne Gilson and Jacques Maritain, who have re-structured the gothic proportions of his work and rendered it more in tune with our humanistic inclinations, that of Maimonides is marked by desuetude and neglect.

The Method of Maimonides

I propose to present a schematic outline of the main elements of the philosophy of Maimonides in order to clarify his method in the field of apologetics. It differs radically from the contemporary approach to theology which is defensive-minded, seeking to establish an autonomous sphere for religion, impregnable to science. Seizing upon the distinction drawn between facts and values, contemporary theology assigns religion to the latter sphere, beyond the domain of science.

The Maimonidean approach, however, rests upon the assumption that epistemic, cognitive factors do not differ in the sphere of religious thought from those utilized in other pursuits. The assumption of such a bifurcation need not be made. In the current relationship of science and religion this view seems no longer popular. Hence, any attempt to advance a modern approach to Maimonides may be viewed quizzically as an act of piety rather than of significant intellectual activity. Nevertheless, in view of the eminence of the figure with whom we are concerned, one may be forgiven for not dismissing the challenge out of hand.

Maimonides The Eclectic

It may be admitted at the outset that Maimonides is an eclectic. This can be a devastating criticism, serving to consign a philosopher to deserved oblivion. Nevertheless, one may argue that all philosophers are essentially eclectic. All draw upon diverse sources in constructing their systems or in developing their methods. The poor thinker borrows features from different systems which prove to be mutually incompatible and discordant. On the other hand, the able, gifted philosopher is able to absorb, select and organize the products of earlier contributors and transform them, by means of his own visionary adaptation. The elements have not been merely added, but synthesized, so as to sustain and strengthen each other within the new system that is advanced. Maimonides, I believe, was the latter type of eclectic, selecting from earlier formulations in the production of a harmonious theology.

The Sources of Maimonides

The theology of Maimonides may be said to rest on a tripod, three major sources and traditions. Firstly, there is Judaism itself, the primary source. Secondly, there is the philosophic literature of Aristotle, with its sober appeal to veridical reason. Finally, there is the religious philosophy of neoPlatonism, developed particularly during the third century C.E., under the impetus of the mystic Plotinus, which had enjoyed considerable vogue. While other influences, such as that of Arabic philosophy, are detectable, nevertheless, stress on these three will serve both to clarify Maimonides' method as well as cast light on his contribution.

It is here that the significance of this study ultimately rests. If successful, it might serve to show the manner in which Maimonides' views can be applied in our own day as well. Utilizing sources available to the contemporary theological eclectic, this method may serve to yield a neoMaimonidean theology suited to our times.

To shed light upon the method of Maimonides there are three major theological subjects which call for investigation. Firstly, there is the problem of the cosmos and the possibility of religious and ethical responsibility. Secondly, there is the issue whether God is transcendent or immanent. Finally, there is the problem of Utopianism and human destiny. In sum, the adequacy of a theology may be judged in terms of its ability to cope with these three areas of investigation.

The Maimonidean Cosmos

In the Guide, Maimonides indicates quite clearly the two approaches, polar opposites in nature, which were available to him in formulating his conception of the universe. The choice was between

Nature as seen in the Kalam, the philosophy of the Mohammedan school, and Nature as seen in the physics of Aristotle. The former favored the doctrine of recurrent, continuous creation, which Maimonides rejected. He chose the latter or, rather, a modification of it. Aristotle posited a nature subject to law governing all phenomenal change. Maimonides opted for it with one proviso, the addition of a primal act of creation, with causal law subsequently becoming operative.

In a lengthy monograph within the *Guide*, Maimonides discusses the Kalamite position with regard to creation. Obviously, its weakness does not lie in its being irreligious. On the contrary, from this vantage point it has much to commend it. Denying the operation of abstract causal law and visualizing nature as beset by disequilibrium, chance and chaos, it views God as constantly re-creating the cosmos with each passing moment. Its atomic hypothesis is most radical, affecting not only matter but time as well. Time consists of moments that are atomic and discontinuous, each moment marking a distinct era in creation. Hence, law is both superfluous and futile. In short, to cope with the accidental nature of atomic substances God is philosophically needed for the maintenance of an "orderly" and, apparently, continuous cosmic pattern.

Rejecting this atomic view, Maimonides adopts the process approach of Aristotle, in which matter and form yield substances, through transformations subject to law. This process-philosophy is less manifestly "religious" than that of the Kalam. Abstract, impersonal law is interposed between God and man. Yet, it has one thing to commend it: it provides room for religious and ethical responsibility. Man is an active participant in the cosmic process. With suitable modification, Maimonides adopts the cosmos of Aristotle.

Clearly enough, the role of God, as spelled out by Maimonides, differs considerably from that of the Kalam and from that of Aristotle. The view of the Kalam serves to exalt God but, correspondingly, reduces the significance of both cosmos and man. In the words of one commentator,

... the principles of the Mutakallimun, such as their atomism . . . are meant to prove that no causality and no permanent order exist in the world; all events are determined directly, without the intervention of intermediate causes, by the will of God, which is not bound by any law. In other words, there is no cosmos and no nature. . . .¹

On the other hand, the Aristotelian God is immanent within nature, the unmoved mover, the vector in the application of cosmic goals and purposes. He is a coordinate factor within the realm of causality, in which hylic matter is eternally present. The transformations of nature

1. Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, translated, with an introduction and notes, by Shlomo Pines. With an introductory essay by Leo Strauss. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963) p. cxxv of the Translator's introduction.

testify to the operations of the Aristotelian Deity. In such a world, man, a part of the universe, is subject to fate, to supervening, impersonal law.

Where the God of Aristotle works internally within the system of nature, and where the Mutakallimun produces God who is apparently transcendent but not really so, since there is no *system* of nature, only an apparent system, Maimonides opts for a God in conformity with Scriptural doctrine, who performs an inscrutable act of creation, an act of will as a truly transcendent Being. It is true that law is part of nature, and man, too, is part of it, yet, parallel with God, man enjoys freedom and responsibility.

It is interesting to note the manner in which Maimonides sloughs off adroitly the position of Aristotle, despite the prestigious weight which it enjoyed. Basing himself on Scriptural revelation, Maimonides argues that the Aristotelian view can be denied on the grounds that it is not based on rational demonstration but is merely a consensus of past opinions. Seemingly, Maimonides' position is intermediate between that of Aristotle and that of the Kalam. Actually, it is no mere eclecticism, but offers a radically different view of God and of man which conforms both to Scripture and to tradition.

Immanence

As conceived of by Maimonides, creation, in conjunction with causality within nature, gives rise to a truly transcendent God. In terms of religious perception, this introduces a new and exceedingly difficult problem: how to re-introduce into nature a God who has been displaced. Man is related to God, but only via nature. The problem, in short, is how to render a transcendent God immanent once again. In offering a solution to the problem yielded by his theology, Maimonides is at his most brilliant, resorting once again to eclecticism, yet weaving together the contributions of diverse traditions so as to yield the requisite immanence to balance the transcendence posited in his reconstruction of Judaism.

Maimonides finds the clue to the solution in the prophetic tradition, which, hitherto, had been seen as a problem to be accounted for by other medieval Jewish philosophers. In a remarkable tour de force, Maimonides seizes upon it as the indispensable ingredient needed to cap his system. By a careful amalgamation of three cultures, the revelation of Scripture, the reason of Aristotle and the desire for fulfillment within the neoPlatonic tradition, Maimonides moves to re-establish God's immanence within nature. Again, he seems to be an eclectic, but, in reality, he is transforming the contributions being selected.

The problem of prophecy is, basically, one of redundancy. Given the

powers of reason, why are prophecy and revelation necessary? Martin Buber, typical of our day, solves the problem by stressing the I-Thou experience rather than the content of the communication. While this subjective experience is significant, the traditional Judaic approach has never lost sight of the moral, practical and insightful consequences of such dialogue.

To grasp the Maimonidean theory of prophecy it is worthwhile to investigate the philosophy of neoPlatonism, with its doctrine of emanations. NeoPlatonism, which developed under the influence of Plotinus, was essentially a philosophical religion that filled a void in the spiritual life of the ancient world. Viewing God as the original Being, it assumes that nature is the result of emanations overflowing in some inevitable manner from the original fount of being. Being and goodness are identical. The more distant the emanations are from the original source, the less real and, consequently, the more corrupt and evil they are.

It must be stressed that such emanations do not assume the operation of will on the part of a transcendent Being. They are the consequence of the superabundant richness of Being bursting through in an inexorable fashion. Religious feeling emerges, according to Plotinus, through the inarticulate yearning of the distant and less real to leap back to, and re-attain, the original fount, to make the leap back to full reality, to perfect goodness. Man, too, wishes to shed his corrupt state and re-achieve union with what is unadulterated and pure. The Platonic influence, based on the radical distinction between the ideal and the real, the pure Form and the ephemeral and transitory, is evident.

Now, Maimonides finds the emanationist theory with regard to being unacceptable. Stressing the concept of Will, he finds in creation the fullest exemplification of the Divine personality. Nevertheless, the idea of *shefa*, of emanational overflow, is incorporated into his theological system in an altered form. No longer applied to being, it is now assigned to the Active Intellect of Aristotle. Immanent in nature, it is the fount of intelligence to which all intelligences seek to be restored.

In the Guide, Maimonides conceives of the Active Intellect as emanating in nature in a two-fold manner, as rationality and as imagination. Both are essential to prophecy. He begins by declaring:

Know that the true reality and quiddity of prophecy consist in its being an overflow overflowing from God, may He be cherished and honored, through the intermediation of the Divine Intellect, toward the rational faculty in the first place and thereafter toward the imaginative faculty.²

Maimonides offers an elaborate description of the nature of these two faculties or qualities. Philosophers are distinguished by the fact that they tend to exemplify the first of these, the rational. On the other

2. Ibid., Part II, chap. 36, p. 369.

hand, statesmen are characterized by the second of these, the imaginative ingredient. It is the prophet who enjoys the distinction of blending and uniting within himself both of these qualities. Moreover, prophets, too, differ in regard to their functional ability and success in amalgamating the two. Moses, the chief of the prophets, achieved the purest and most exalted synthesis.

The modified emanational theory of Maimonides, applied to the Active Intellect, is no longer compelled to assume the consequence of the neoPlatonistic view that man is necessarily corrupt. Yes, there is an innate yearning, a desire and longing to be restored to the original fount, but it is not one of reality or of goodness. Rather is it that of the Intellect. Such union is not to be achieved or fulfilled by denying the body as corrupt and evil. Rather, the method of its realization is by applying the maximum synthesis of the rational and the imaginative, by establishing order and harmony, by attaining mastery over the body instead of nullifying it, and by encouraging the full development of the spiritual resources of man and society. The full significance of this immanent view of God in terms of intellect and the emergence of intellectual hunger is found in the third and final element of the Maimonidean theology which we propose to discuss, his Utopianism.

All people, he declares, possess this quality of the Divine Intellect in some measure. It is the prophet, however, who is distinguished by the fact that he is so abundantly endowed that it overflows from him, at times against his will, and is transmitted to others.³ This *shefa*, or emanational overflow, is the leavening quality of the Divine Intellect present throughout creation, immanent within the cosmos. Not by the sloughing off of corruption through a mystical leap back to the Fount, but, rather, by attaining maturity and stature, and thus demonstrating intellectual competence on the highest level, does one deserve to achieve immortality, union with the Active Intellect.

Prayer and Mizvot

Both prayer and the commandments, to which Maimonides devotes a substantial part of his Guide, are to be understood in terms of the above two doctrines of transcendence and immanence. Prayer acknowledges God both as Creator, hence as transcendent, and as the source of law and of intellect, hence as immanent. Prayer to change the consequences of the laws of nature is futile. Our very prayer renders God immanent within nature. We exemplify reason and imagination through prayer.

Similarly, the *mizvot*, or commandments, serve to evoke God both as transcendent and as immanent, in nature or in human history. An

3. Ibid., Part II, chap. 37, p. 374.

illustration of this is found in the fourth of the Ten Commandments. In Exodus 20:2, the Sabbath is seen in terms of Creation, since God "rested on the seventh day." On the other hand, in Deuteronomy 5:15, the Sabbath is offered as a day of leisure so that "thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt."

Secondly, the *mizvot* appeal both to the rational and the imaginative elements in man, both being deemed essential to the achievement of an integrated personality and a community enjoying an overriding balance and equilibrium amid the strains and stresses of affairs. Emotions and passions are not necessarily evil; they can serve to foster growth and self-transcendence.

For Maimonides, religious feeling is practically synonymous with intellectual hunger, which he conceives to be present, to some extent, in all men. By intellectual activity I do not simply mean analysis or deduction. It is much wider in scope, including intuitive visualizations and the development of the imaginative capacity. As stated in the Guide, it means, "... retaining things perceived by the senses, combining these things, and imitating them."⁴

Another observation worth noting is that Maimonides differs with the view of Plato that philosophers, having attained the ideal perception of justice, are most fit to rule the state, being least susceptible to being duped or misled by momentary impulses. Similarly, Aristotle, although not quite so sanguine about the rarefied status of the philosopher, is equally convinced as to the capacity of the philosopher to fulfil the role of statesman. Maimonides, however, stresses the primacy of imagination in the statesman's discharge of his duties. He groups together the "... legislators, the soothsayers, the augurs, and the dreamers of veridical dreams."⁵

Finally, the prophet, or his modern successor, is one who combines the two aspects of reason. Neither deliberation alone, nor a vibrant imagination is adequate. Both are needed to achieve the tempered personality, hungering for fulfillment. The prophet applies the quintessential qualities of the philosopher and the statesman—refined rational habits and a delicate and subtly responsive sensitivity to historical possibilities.

Utopianism

The third element which I propose to discuss briefly, with reference to the Maimonidean theology, is that of Utopianism. In Scripture, the dwelling of Israel in peace and security on its land, and the achievement of the universal era of peace, are associated with the acknowledgement of God, the worship of Him and the fulfillment of the Commandments.

4. Ibid., Part II, chap. 36, p. 370.

5. Ibid., Part II, chap. 37, p. 374.

They are a reward and the marks of His grace bestowed upon Israel and mankind respectively.

Maimonidean Utopianism can be best understood as an inevitable outgrowth of the theological doctrine of immanence. In the state of Utopianism, the triumph and fulfillment of God as immanent, both in Israel and in human affairs, will be realized. The Active Intellect and the *mizvot* will find maximum embodiment, the 613 precepts being applicable to Israel, and the Noahide laws governing all other men.

Not only Social Utopianism is visualized, but, also, Personal Utopianism, properly so called. For resurrection, according to the Guide, is not so much a reward as a theological dimension, marking the highest capacity for immanence of God, qua reason, within the cosmos of the individual. As Utopian visions they are, then, not antithetical and incompatible, but mark different levels of aspiration in the fulfillment of reason.

Conclusion

Elsewhere, I have had occasion to present the novel approach used by Maimonides in dealing with the problem of Divine Justice.⁶ In the third and final section of the Guide, Maimonides resorts to the tormented figure of the Biblical Job as a vehicle for exploring this theme. It is quite evident, in terms of our earlier discussion, that this concerns God when viewed as transcendent, omnipotent, as Creator and Sovereign.

This article was motivated by the tremendous ferment manifested in contemporary religious thought. In the countervailing impulses and tendencies apparent in theology today, of particular concern to us are, on the one hand, the legacy of post-Hegelianism, of Feuerbach and of all those who stress God as immanent, and, on the other hand, those who, like Martin Buber, stress transcendence and dialogue.

In this often strident clash of views, Maimonides emerges as a relevant voice, rational and highly pertinent. He offers a synthesizing approach incorporating both immanence and transcendence in his probing of the distinctiveness of Judaism. It may just possibly be the spiritual fare for the perplexed of our age.

6. Joel Laks, "The Enigma of Job: Maimonides and the Moderns," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. XCIII, Dec. 1964, pp. 345-364.

The Jewish Revolution Is Not Complete

NORMAN LEVINE

POLITICAL EVENTS HAVE NEVER BEEN HERMETICALLY contained within the realm of the purely political. Rather, they have reached out and touched every aspect of society. Specifically, they have had an enormous impact on culture. The development of a culture, the direction and the speed of that development, have been significantly determined by the course of political history.

The European Revolutions of 1848 acted as a watershed between two periods of cultural history. Those revolutions which witnessed the writing of the *Communist Manifesto* failed to achieve their goals. In central Europe, for example, German territorial unity was not achieved, nor was Germany given a liberal constitution. The 1848 revolutions failed in every respect, and the only victors to emerge from these upheavals were the realistic, Machiavellian conservative-reactionary states of Europe.

Before 1848, European culture was dominated by the Romantic movement. Romantic culture possessed an optimism regarding the historical future, faith in the human potential and in human nature, and a tendency to see man as part of, and participant in, a universal spiritual force moving to a fulfillment of human capabilities and powers. After 1848, the cultural milieu changed completely. It was an age of realism, not of poetry, but of science. It was the age of Darwin, of chemistry and physics. Whereas pre-1848 was the world of Shelley and Wordsworth, post-1848 was the world of Bismarck and "blood and iron."

Analogous statements can be made about the Third World Revolution. Certainly, this was a revolution of global proportions. The formerly colonized, the people of colored skin, the non-Christian world population, fought for, and won, their freedom from the imperial white Christian population. This victory is unparalleled in the history of mankind. Not only has it left them politically sovereign but, also, it has fundamentally altered their culture and their own self-consciousness.

Frantz Fanon was the best representative of this altered black consciousness.¹ In his two great works, *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon explored not only the deficiency of being

1. For further clarification of this point see my article, "Frantz Fanon as a Zionist," JUDAISM, Fall 1972, pp. 428-436.

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black but the new dignity of being black. His great achievement was to open avenues toward the evolution of a proud, self-sufficient black identity. Through the diagnostic of black deprivation, he was able to explore the frontier of black potency and black creativity. Fanon was possible only during the victorious march of the Third World Revolution. His vision of black genius was possible only when black genius was in the process of realizing itself. In Richard Wright's *Native Son*, written before the Third World Revolution, the hero, a black man named Bigger Thomas, murdered a white and died helplessly in the gas chamber. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, written after the Algerian Revolution, Fanon described the political use of violence, and how violence allowed the formerly oppressed Algerian to achieve his liberation and, through his political autonomy, his socio-cultural self-determination.

The conquest of territorial sovereignty by the Jewish people in Palestine was another manifestation of the Third World Revolution. Zionism was a national liberation movement.² A national entity, the Jewish people, found that their complete cultural autonomy was impossible without enlandisement. For the Jews, as for other colonized nations, liberation and land were synonymous. Like the Algerians, the Cubans, the Chinese, the Viet Nameese, the Jews found that only territorial independence could act as the foundation, the ground of not only political, but, also, culturo-religious and personal self-determination.

Hebrew was revived as the language of the Jew. Through Labor Zionism, an attempt was made to break into the mercantile and professional biases of Jews, and to introduce the concept of the dignity and regenerative power of labor. The kibbuzim were a lasting testimony to the idealism and the search for renewal of Labor Zionism. In addition, Zionism completely altered Jewish self-identity, the Jewish self-image. The War of Independence of 1947-48 erased the image of the Jew as passive, as accommodating, as ghettoized. It became self-reliant, aggressive, victorious.

But the full impact of the Jewish revolution has still to be felt. Every revolution, particularly one so momentous as the War of Independence, that changed two thousand years of historical existence, must have philosophical and theological implications. In order for a revolution to take on metaphysical meaning, older metaphysical assumptions must be adjusted to incorporate the idea of the revolution. This essay is an attempt to explore the radical implications of the Jewish revolutionary movement of 1947 to 1967. However, this essay is not the first such attempt. The work of Albert Memmi, French-Jewish sociologist and philosopher, was the first consistent literary effort to diagnose how

2. A more complete elaboration of this point will be found in my article, "The End of the Third World Revolution," *JUDAISM*, Fall 1971, pp. 443-455.

the Jewish revolutionary movement had changed the Jewish mind and Jewish consciousness.

Memmi was born in Tunisia. He lived through the Tunisian rebellion against the French, as well as the Algerian insurrection. Later, he went to live in France, to teach and to write. Memmi and history crossed roads in North Africa. Memmi was white, but he was also Jewish; a white Jew living in a dark-skinned Moslem country which had been conquered by white Catholics. On an immediate and personal level, he learned the meaning of a colonial revolution. Sensitive and involved, he was acquainted with the colonized mentality; he experienced the Third World Revolution from the inside. Living at a unique juncture in history, Memmi made it his mission to study the full implications that the colonial image had for the Jewish condition.

In a colonial world the colonized, the I, found his self-image destroyed by the colonizer, the Other, and, therefore, was forced to accept the negative image of the I which the Other wished to impose. An external image, concocted from the racist and exploitative intentions of the Other, was imprinted upon the self-consciousness of the colonized, the I. The colonized was, therefore, totally determined from the outside. The colonial world was a Manichaeian one. On the one side was the brutal and overcoming force of the imperialist, and on the other was the conquered and deficient self-image of the overcome.³

In three books, which constitute his major works, *Portrait of a Jew*, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, and *The Liberation of the Jew*,⁴ Memmi explored systematically the meaning which the colonial image had for the Jew. The history of the Israelite, his entire culture, according to Memmi, were expressions of an imperialized people. Such a vision was allowed only to a Jew caught in the vicissitudes of an anti-French, North African national liberation movement. The vision represented a major intellectual achievement.

Racism, Memmi felt, was an attempt philosophically to legitimize a socially and economically exploitative situation. From the point of view of the colonized, racist oppression led to the petrification of his culture. Accepting the master's accusation of inherent deficiency, the colonized lacked the creative energy to develop his culture. Rather, his

3. The colonial situation is described in more detail in my article "Frantz Fanon as a Zionist." A more extended insight can be gained by reading the following sources: Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967); G. Hegel, "Master and Slave," *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. George Lichtheim (New York: Harper and Row, 1968); Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969).

4. Albert Memmi, *Portrait of a Jew*, trans. Elizabeth Abbott (New York: Orion Press, 1962).

——— *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, trans. Howard Greenfeld (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965).

——— *The Liberation of the Jew*, trans. Judy Hyun (New York: Orion Press, 1966).

culture calcified at the level of traditional values. This notion of cultural arrestment was an important one for Memmi, since he was to return to it when writing later about the liberation of the Jew.

In Tunisia, or from Tunisia, Memmi learned that the colonized was the eternally accused, stigmatized by an irremovable indictment. For Memmi, there were two basic responses to this externally imposed condemnation: assimilation or rebellion. Assimilation was an attempt to escape the indictment by disappearance, ultimate self-rejection; rebellion was an attempt to transcend the indictment by destroying the conditions which allowed for such a verdict.

According to Memmi, the proletarian model for domination did not fit the Jew, because the Jew was not really a class. But the colonial model did fit the Jew because the Jew was a nation. In an age of national liberation movements, Memmi was the first Jewish writer to define the Jews almost exclusively as a nationality and, thus, see their fate as a form of national oppression similar to that of the Tunisian or the American black. In Memmi's vision, nationality superseded religion as the basis of Jewish identity.

Memmi's message was direct and stark: the radical self-affirmation of Jewish identity. He made rebellion the central theme of Jewish existence in the 20th Century. The Jewish people must undergo a national liberation movement, because only a national rebellion could totally destroy the colonial situation of the Jew. Only after national liberation could a new Jewish personality, could the Jew—as—freedom, emerge.

Various avenues of Jewish liberation existed. Above all, Memmi argued, Jewish liberation must be total. It must destroy every aspect of colonial domination. The institutions and value structure which made for the petrification of Jewish cultural must be uprooted. The founding of the State of Israel represented such a national liberation movement and the total liberation of the Jew.

Not Auschwitz, but Israel, according to Memmi, was the central event of Jewish existence in the 20th Century. He affirmed celebration, victory, rather than holocaust and cosmological lunacy. Israel meant rebellion, the radical affirmation of Jewish identity. It put an end to Jewish negativity. It concluded the arrestment of Jewish culture, opened up new horizons of philosophical and cultural growth based upon a resurgent nationalism. There was a new Jewishness in Israel: not the Jew of the synagogue, but the Jew of the territorial state. In Hegelian fashion, the slave had liberated himself, had found the state to be the means of liberation, and with a weapon in his hand, rather than a Bible, talked as equal, or master, within his own boundaries.

Memmi correctly estimated the revolutionary impact that successful territorial nationalism must have for Jewish culture. For him, 1948 did not mark the end of the Jewish revolution, but, rather, its beginning.

The vestiges of colonialism as a political and religio-philosophical datum must continue to be eradicated from Jewish behavior. Finally, Memmi made the concept of rebellion a theological category for the Jew. Meaningful Jewish existence in the 20th Century is impossible unless it faces the question not only of terror, but of insurrection.

Building on the work of Memmi, new insights can be gained into the nature and meaning of Jewish thought. Understanding the Jewish past as the history and culture of a colonized people has critical implications for the entire spectrum of Jewish theology and philosophy. Several central and pivotal conceptions of Jewish theology are now revealed as constructs which apologized for accommodationism to political oppression. One such dysfunctional aspect of the Jewish cultural tradition, which did not permit the Jew to assume the dignity and assertiveness of free people was the idea of the diaspora.

The diaspora has been one of the most cherished concepts of Jewish thought, and Simon Dubnow, Ahad Ha-Am and Martin Buber are just a few who have speculated upon its meaning. Dubnow defined the Jewish people as a nationality. He understood that they were not a political nation. Lacking a territory, lacking a state, they could not be a political nation. He drew a distinction, however, between a statist nationality and a cultural one. Even though missing a territorial base, the historico-cultural traditions of the Jews made them into a nation.⁵

This separation between the real and the ideal, between the spiritual and the political, in Dubnow's eyes, could act as a source of Jewish survival. Dubnow was not a Zionist. He did not feel that enlandisement in Palestine was the only means of Jewish survival. Rather, national or cultural autonomy within other states could also lead to Jewish survival. He did not think that all Jews, even if it were possible, would emigrate to Palestine. Therefore, the struggle for cultural and religious equality within foreign nations would strengthen the very sinews of Jewish society and, thus, lead to their preservation. The diaspora, by calling for Jewish spiritual mobilization, was a force making for the survival of this culturo-historical nationality.⁶

In the writing of Dubnow, the exile was given a positive meaning. It was made to appear as a basis for Jewish perpetuation. The exile was given historical justification. It was made to appear not only as a theological condition imposed upon the Jews by God, but as an environmental datum which would enhance Jewish continuation. From Dubnow's perspective, minority status within other nations was tolerable, was not itself evidence of slavery or of domination. In his vision, national pride and national identity could be derived from the culturo-spiritual

5. Simon Dubnow, "The Affirmation of the Diaspora," in *Nationalism and History*, ed. by Koppel S. Pinson (New York: Atheneum, 1970), p. 182.

6. Dubnow, "National Autonomy," in *Nationalism and History*, p. 96.

accomplishment of a people, and statelessness was not felt as any great loss.

Unlike Dubnow, Ahad Ha-Am was a Zionist who saw the need of a center of Jewish life in Palestine.⁷ However, like Dubnow, Ahad Ha-Am also separated the spiritual from the political. He was a dualist; the real and ideal were separate. Thus, for Ahad Ha-Am, a center of Jewish life in Palestine need not be politically autonomous, but, rather, could be a center of religious and cultural study, reflection and writing. What Ahad Ha-Am had in mind was not a nation-state, but a clerico-academic community.

The inherent dualism of Ahad Ha-Am's thought, was clearly manifested by what he said about the diaspora:

. . . their attitude toward the diaspora is subjectively negative but objectively positive. Dispersion is a thoroughly evil and unpleasant thing, but we can and must live in dispersion, for all its evils and all its unpleasantness. Exodus from the dispersion will always be, as it always has been, an inspiring hope for the distant future; but the date of that consummation is the secret of a higher power, and our survival as a people is not dependent upon it.⁸

Inwardly, in the realm of the spirit, the diaspora was negative, causing personal suffering and pain. Outwardly, in the realm of the objective, the diaspora was positive; it had contributed to the survival of the Jewish nation. By separating the real from the ideal, the practical from the spiritual, Ahad Ha-Am made the diaspora a tolerable condition. In spite "of all its evils and all its unpleasantness," the enduring of the diaspora was an act of dignity and heroism because the enduring itself entailed perpetuation.

The exile, for Ahad Ha-Am, was not seen as total slavery, as categorical domination. Subjectively, the exile was oppression, but objectively, it was national self-preservation. Lastly, the exile involved the expectancy of the messiah. Exilic life would cease with the messianic arrival. Thus, messianic expectation also tended to make the diaspora tolerable, a temporary burden which the Jew must suffer in preparation for an eschatological and millennial moment. From the point of view of eternity, temporal suffering lost its significance.

Even Martin Buber saw that valuable cultural contributions had evolved from the diaspora. Buber was an early advocate of Zionism who understood the need for a territorially sovereign state to act as the basis for Jewish revival. He had fully accepted the Jewish state as it emerged from the war of 1948. But even though a nationalist, Buber felt that the diaspora had contributed to the cosmopolitanism and humanism of Jewish thought. Because of Jewish dispersal, because of its very root-

7. Ahad Ha-Am "The Negation of the Diaspora" in *The Zionist Idea*, ed. by Arthur Hertzberg (New York: Atheneum, 1969), p. 270.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 271.

lessness, the Jew had learned to think in universalist terms. The Jewish people were taught in the diaspora that only complete human emancipation, only the general freedom and betterment of mankind, could be the source of their own liberation. In other words, because the Jew was rootless, because he was subject to oppression, only the universal freedom of mankind could bring about his own personal and group emancipation. In this way, the cosmopolitanism of Jewish thought was reaffirmed and strengthened.⁹

The interpretations of the diaspora found in Dubnow, Ahad Ha-Am and Buber served to idealize the history of the Jewish nation. Because of the division which all of these men made between the inner culturo-religious life of the nation, and the oppressive socio-political life, the diaspora was spiritualized and, thereby, distorted. All three viewed the diaspora in dualistic terms, the opposition of the spirit and reality. They found in the spirit, in the ideal, in the non-material, the triumph of Jewish history. But in focusing on the non-material aspects of the diaspora, in applauding its non-physical factors, they spiritualized Jewish history. They looked upon the exilic condition almost in Hegelian fashion: that Jewish history was the story and revelation of the Universal Idea. Such a presentation was the purest idealism, and suffered from all the unreality of any form of idealism. It did not relate, it had no bearing to the actual, real, social existence of the Jewish nation. It was divorced from the actual content of historical life.

Since the Jews were a colonized people, since they were an imperialized people, any spiritualization or idealization of the diaspora was totally false. The colonial history of the Jew warns us not to see the Jewish past as the triumph of the spirit, but, rather, as a story of slavery and domination. It tells us that the survival of the Jew was not an act of pure Idea, not God in history, but, rather, a glandular reaction to oppression, self-preservation through violence in the face of imperial subjection. It de-potentized the Jew.

The theme of exile, then, did not have positive meaning for Jewish existence. It was not a cultural tradition which encouraged behavior aimed at freedom or emancipation. The theme of exile was really a dysfunctional aspect of the Jewish heritage. It tended to produce behavior which was accommodationist and acquiescent toward slavery and subjection. The glorification of the exilic theme was a poisonous expression of a colonized nation and a colonized culture.

It was the Jewish revolutionary movement which revealed the Jewish condition as a colonial situation. The growth of the Jewish national liberation movement, Zionism, illustrated that the diaspora had no theological or sociological redeeming features, but was, rather,

9. Martin Buber, "The Jew in the World," in *Israel and the World* (New York: Schocken Books, 1948), pp. 167-172.

the degraded existence of an imperialized nation. The founding of the State of Israel meant the decolonization of the Jew. Only when the Jew had been decolonized could his history of colonization be seen in all of its ramifications.

The diaspora is at an end because the Jew has been decolonized. Before the founding of the State of Israel, to live in the diaspora implied a non-voluntary action. The Jews were exiled against their will. They continued to live in exile against their will. They would have preferred to live in Palestine. Thus, the diaspora implied compulsion. Jewish dispersal was based on political coercion.

The process of Jewish decolonization has taken away from diasporic existence its non-voluntary aspect. The success of Jewish national liberation, the sovereign enlandisement of the Jew in Palestine, has meant that the Jew need no longer live in exile. A choice exists for him. He can voluntarily emigrate to Israel. He can voluntarily remain in foreign countries.

With the disappearance of the notion of involuntary, of coerced exile, the diasporic idea has lost all meaning. Even though he is free to move to Israel, a Jew may exercise his free choice and remain in America. A Jew who makes such a choice in freedom, no longer lives in un-freedom, no longer lives in the diaspora. But the diaspora could come to an end only with the acquisition of choice. Freedom abolishes involuntary servitude and the abolition of involuntary servitude abolishes the diaspora. The acquisition of choice required, however, the success of Zionism. The winning of territorial sovereignty, Jewish decolonization, gave the Jew the choice of ending the exile by coming to Israel or ending the exile by freely deciding not to come to Israel.

Zionism has given the Jew free choice.¹⁰ Politics has changed the Jewish sociological and historical condition. Now, the politicization of Jewish theology and philosophy is in order.

Jewish culture, when interpreting the Jewish past, must no longer make the fateful separation between the spiritual and the actual. The history of the Jews must no longer be written from the dualist point of view. Politics enslaved us. Politics freed us. The political must be incorporated in all levels of Jewish culture. The task of future Jewish culture, the Jewish culture which has been politicized, will tell us that freedom is concrete actuality. A politicized Jewish culture will not tell us, as Jewish culture told us in the past, that it is possible to remain objectively enslaved but spiritually free. The colonized past of the Jew has allowed him to see that freedom for him can only be freedom as concrete actuality.

10. On the relationship between nationalism and social progress see my article, "Karl Marx and the Arab-Israeli Problem," *JUDAISM*, Spring 1970, pp. 145-157.

The history of the Jews as a colonized people has shown that rebellion and insurrection are categories of existence. Revolution and rebellion overthrew colonial domination. They gave meaning to Jewish life in the 20th Century. They offered an alternative vision to the colossal waste of Auschwitz. They were weapons in the search for dignity. As such, they must be incorporated into Jewish theology and philosophy as valid categories of thought. Rebellion and insurrection are methods which a colonized people use to achieve their emancipation. The Jewish revolution made Israel make the Jew free. It is time that rebellion and insurrection, that which more than anything else preserved our people after Hitler, were made modes of Jewish meditation.

The diaspora is over. It is not only dead, it should never have existed as an idealized state. Israel has politicized Jewish thought. The radical political foundations of Israel have laid the basis for the radicalization of Jewish thought. In the post-holocaust era, Israel is the only answer to despair. Israel as a decolonizing act has revealed the diaspora for what it was: simple conquest, total negation and the basis of Jewish deficiency.

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Exclamations, Manifestoes, and Other Literary Peripheries*

WARREN BARGAD

IN DECEMBER, 1971, THE ISRAELI DAILY, *DAVAR*, published the first issue of its newly refurbished Friday literary supplement called *Masa*. In a leadoff article, one of *Masa*'s editors, the well-known Israeli writer, Aharon Meged, spoke of the period since the Six-Day War as "a time of letdown after a great exaltation." In a later issue, Meged called on the Israeli literary community to counter the national doldrums by founding a new journal for literature led by "dynamic, devoted editors" like those the Yishuv (pre-state Palestinian Jewry) had known in the years between the First and Second World Wars:

[We need] something young, fresh, iconoclastic arrogant, rebellious, exciting, and inspiring . . . [We need] the time of the Six-Day War, the Six-Day War itself, the four years which followed it, with all the celebrations, the great hopes, the expectations, the disappointments, the frustration, and the fears. . . . All this was a great experience, very great and new, which awakened new powers and created a new style—we don't perceive it yet, but it's so, it created a new style . . . and [this new style] must be expressed by a younger generation, and they need a new journal, a journal open to the *times*, open, that is, to all the problems of the times and our country, not only to the problems of literature—and if [such a journal] comes into being, it will bring a new spirit to *all* literature.†

Not long after the appearance of these pronouncements by Meged, a group of young writers, critics, and scholars did, indeed, initiate a new Hebrew literary journal called *Siman Kria* (in literal translation, "Exclamation Point"). One can only speculate as to any direct, causal connection with Meged's exhortations, but *Siman Kria*'s introductory statement of purpose is undeniably reminiscent of Meged's fervent rhetoric, if not of his somewhat sentimental sense of history.

Siman Kria did not appear *ex nihilo*, historically speaking. In coming to public notice when it did, it neatly, but only coincidentally, celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the first important "new-frontier" literary journal to appear in Mandatory Palestine, *Hedim* ("Echoes"), which was first published in 1922 under the editorship of Jacob Rabino-witz and Asher Barash. Highly influential, though it was of modest

*Remarks on the appearance of *Siman Kria* (Exclamation Point), a Diversified Quarterly for Literature, edited by Menahem Perry and Meir Wieseltier. (Tel Aviv: University Publications). Volume I, Number 1, September, 1972.

† I have purposely rendered all my translations from the Hebrew in this article in a rather literal style.—W.B.

dimensions and only moderate duration, *Hedim* had proclaimed that in "days of spiritual weakness and apathy toward our Hebrew literature" it aimed "not at a transvaluation or renewal of values" but, simply, at "vitality" for Hebrew writers "who crave something, who are seeking a way [to express] a new feeling, a vibrant idea."

Siman Kria's manifesto is far less romantic in its tone and far more specific and forthright in its rebellious posture. Reflecting some aspects of the *american review*, but much more ambitious in size and intent and more variegated in the spectrum of its materials, *Siman Kria* aims at nothing less than becoming the main purveyor of "what is central and worthy of notice in contemporary [Israeli] writing." *Hedim's* editors, in calling for relevance, had employed euphemisms like "feeling," "purity," and "truth;" but *Siman Kria's* stance is clearly moralistic and, in an aesthetic sense, humanitarian. Its spokesmen claim that Israel, today, is vitally in need of a literary journal which will truly cater to "the needs of [current literature] itself and to the needs of its reading audience." Ambitious yet vague, this statement is clarified mainly in terms of literary politics and aesthetics.

The political implications of *Siman Kria's* birth become evident in the course of its self-definition as a remedy for the absence of a journal of "real, vital depth," a journal able to provide a "meaningful framework" for literary endeavor. By presenting the "best" of Israel's current literary output, *Siman Kria* hopes to end the "amorphous mass of cacophonous, dilettantish, and pseudo-scholarly prattle" which, its editors believe, has long plagued the Israeli literary scene. Such highly charged rhetoric blatantly reflects *Siman Kria's* quasi-political self-image: a vote for *this* journal means a vote for unity and order, professionalism and relevance.

Siman Kria's explicit statement of intent to change an old-guard state of chaos into a new, effective frontier is not unprecedented. Ironically, it echoes the opening editorial comments of Israel's oldest, mainstream literary journal, *Moznayim* ("Scale," or "Balance"), founded in 1929 as the organ of the newly constituted Hebrew Writers' Association. *Moznayim*, for the past two decades at least, has borne the brunt of persistent ideological attacks, especially by writers involved in new ventures in literary journalism. But its original editors, I.D. Berkowitz and Fischel Lachower, saw in *Moznayim* an antidote for the state of "decline" and "deterioration," the loss of "clear direction," which, in their view, plagued contemporary Hebrew letters. They, too, intended their journal to be an instrument of renewal, of "clearing the literary atmosphere," and, especially, of "gathering together the scattered forces and restoring the impaired unity" of the Yishuv's literary effort.

Moznayim's call to unity some forty years ago parallels the mandate

which *Siman Kria* has currently imposed on itself; and yet it would be a mistake to equate the factors motivating these two periodicals. *Moznayim*'s editors exhibited a sensitive awareness of their actual historical context—it was, they felt, the thrust of history which had brought *Moznayim* into being; it was a matter of determined necessity, not a willed choice. By the early twenties, they knew that the Soviet regime had effectively shut down the formerly prolific Hebrew presses of Russia and the Ukraine; and Odessa, long the center of the Hebrew renaissance, had had to be abandoned. But even beyond the reach of Soviet officialdom, Hebrew literary life seemed on the wane in Europe. By the mid-twenties, the Berlin community of Hebrew literati—including Bialik and Agnon, for example—was in the process of breaking up and moving gradually to Palestine. By 1929, *Hatekufa*, the giant of Hebrew literary journals, already transferred from Moscow to Warsaw and then to Berlin, was floundering, along with the whole Stybel Press enterprise, which, since 1917, had been so significant in financing the development of modern Hebrew literature. Linked to its Zionist-Hebraist ideology and constituency, the Hebrew literary establishment had been transplanted virtually in its entirety, by the end of the twenties, to Tel Aviv. This historical reality prompted *Moznayim*'s editors to see as their mandate the reunification and reinforcement of the entire post-World War I generation of Hebrew writers and readers, a generation whose forces were regrouping in the new Palestinian environment.

Amid the great turmoil which has befallen Jewish communal life with the disintegration of its main center in Eastern Europe, our literature has not suffered a spiritual revolution which carries within itself the seeds of future renewal; instead, it has suffered total anarchy and ideological chaos. Our literature had an inner unity, which . . . made it a vital, productive force in the life of our people, but that unity has now been shattered. Our best writers . . . have wandered off out of an overwhelming sense of powerlessness and despair . . . [We need now to] reinstate our literature's inner unity, torn asunder by the ravages of our time.

Moznayim obviously assumed for itself a role dictated by forces well beyond the ambit of purely literary endeavor. The historical perspective evident in *Siman Kria*'s manifesto is, however, quite different. The editors of *Siman Kria* appear to be responding, not to an extrinsic dimension of historical reality, but to an intrinsic condition of aesthetic development. They propose to provide new directions in literary offerings and analysis; they demand "newness," "vitality," the fulfillment of contemporary, aesthetic "needs;" they reject what they consider to be passé values in each of the four main categories to be included in the journal's "mixed literary" bag: 1) original fiction and poetry; 2) Hebrew translations of important contemporary works; 3) articles of literary analysis and research; and, finally, 4) reviews of recent Israeli literary works. Much of the manifesto is devoted to explicating *Siman*

Kria's position in regard to each of these categories. In each case, the tone is quite outspoken, strained, even pugnacious.

Beyond the catch-all terms "centrality" and "worthiness," the editors of *Siman Kria* clearly pride themselves on what they see as the revolutionary nature of their journal's published prose (though no such claim is made for its poetry, which appears to be more distinguished, if not more avant-garde) :

We are happy that our first issue has been able to present stories which depart from the mainstream of current prose. . . . The three works of fiction presented differ from one another, but they have in common liberation from the pillory of Agnonesque and are far from [duplicating] his stylistics. The stories are not a puzzle of meanings, they are devoid of heavy-handed, ironic twists, and they lack the patterns of allusion [or the allegorical implications] that weigh so heavily [on the reader].

In the editors' view, the fiction published in this first issue offers its readers "an observation of fundamental realities, [*gufei meziut*];" furthermore, it is purported to "flow properly from the literary possibilities of Israeli reality;" and, finally, its language is "narratively determinative [*sipurit-tahlitit*] and does not stew in its own juices"

The current needs, as the editors have determined them here, are obviously an unambiguous "realism" and a contemporaneity in both theme and style. Of course, the assumptions implicit in these statements of policy and self-description are that, until now, Israeli literature has been overly obtuse, or allegorical, or allusive; that its language has been too euphuistic or "old-fashioned;" and that it has been remote from an authentic "Israeli reality." Such assumptions cannot go without challenge, however: Why should Agnon—two years after his death at the age of 81—suddenly become the focal point, even symbolically, for a revolution in Hebrew literature? Why Agnon, whose major works (if they are, in fact, to be considered non-"Israeli" or non-"realistic") were published before 1948? Has there, indeed, been no development of an indigenous Israeli literary tradition "realistic" enough to counteract the "excesses" of Agnon's generation? Do the editors of *Siman Kria* mean to say that works by the "48-ers"—writers like S. Yizhar, Benjamin Tammuz, Moshe Shamir, and Aharon Meged—are generally too allegorical and that their language is too contrived? And are the works of the second generation of Israeli authors—prose-writers like Amos Oz, A. B. Yehoshua (who both serve on the editorial board of *Siman Kria*), and Amalia Kahana-Carmon—mostly "unrealistic"?

Ingenuousness aside, over the years there certainly has been much discussion of the "place" of Israeli literature in the development of modern Hebrew letters. The debate peaked in the sixties, in the wake of the late Baruch Kurzweil's essays which argued that Israeli literature was discontinuous with, and even antithetical to, the entire development

of the Hebrew literary tradition in modern times. The historical question itself has since abated, but *Siman Kria*'s spokesmen seem either to ignore the issue's prior existence or to reshape Kurzweil's outdated indictments into current desiderata. In any case, the inference is that *now* is the time for the *real* revolution in Israeli literary development.

The most troubling aspect of this part of the *Siman Kria* manifesto is the suggestion that, somehow, Israeli literature has hitherto neither reflected sufficiently (if at all) an "Israeli reality" nor arisen out of its "literary possibilities." To make such a claim about the various social and psychological novels by Yizhar, Shamir, and Meged, among others, is ludicrous, even utterly specious. But there is another historical irony here, at least as far as the rhetoric of literary manifestoes is concerned. In 1945, Moshe Shamir, then 24 years old, composed a manifesto of sorts, called "With My Contemporaries" (*Im bnei dori*), for *Yalkut hare'im* ("The Friends' Magazine"), a "little" magazine founded by a group of young writers during the Second World War. Shamir's demand, employing a rhetoric similar in its hyperbole to that of *Siman Kria*'s manifesto, was that the new Hebrew literature of *his* generation had to be totally, excruciatingly "realistic:"

We shall never be able to cut ourselves off from life, we shall never be able to escape it, we shall never fear it. . . . The world was not created for the beautiful, the wise, the good—the world was created for washerwomen, for those who dream of beauty, wisdom, goodness . . . for those who will never be completely victorious. . . . There is no hiding place, no dark corner of human life that does not demand expression, there is not a drop of our blood which is not a part of our whole life-experience . . . All of the "friends"—they're my contemporaries. Nothing unites us more than a feeling of responsibility to our generation; above and beyond the perplexities of creativity and the songs of modernism . . . what drives us on is the feeling of complete, one-hundred-percent belonging to the *revolution of humanity*. . . . Perceiving the world and life as they really are, without illusions, does not conflict in any way with the deepest idealism. On the contrary: it's the very first condition for the existence and development of idealism. The day of cynicism is over. . . . But it will not be replaced by a pleasant, euphuistic, sweet, naive literature; it will be replaced by a revolutionary, realistic, *merciless* literature.

Shamir's notion of "utter realism" was not only rooted in a naturalistic context: it was also weighted with the utilitarian role of an activist social revolution. Literature, in this view, was conceived as being both *about* the people and *for* the people; and the literature produced by Shamir's "friends" was to be responsible for radically reforming the everyday, common "Hebrew reality" that it depicted. This idea or philosophy of literature has been given numerous ideological formulations—from Ahad Ha'am's didactic view of Hebrew literature as something necessarily "sober" and "rational," something designed to inculcate the proper Jewish "national feeling," to Soviet hard-line cultural concepts of "socialist realism" which aim, primarily, at dramatiz-

ing the success of Marxist-Leninist principles; to the recently expressed insistence of Black ideologues, that all art is essentially political and that artistic endeavor should be, primarily, a tool to further the cause of Black consciousness and national liberation.

It is immaterial whether one accepts this basically ideological point of view—or any of its variables—or, more specifically, whether Shamir's concept is actually fulfilled in the works of Israel's first generation of writers. The fact is that this mandate, the plea for "realism" in *Siman Kria's* manifesto, constitutes, at best, only the most recent eruption of periodically reactivated cries for "relevance" in Israeli literature.

At least two other journals, issued between Shamir's essay in 1945 and Meged's comments in 1971, have pointed to the same pressing need. The founders of *Likrat* ("Toward"), a modest, short-lived, but historically important journal, first published in 1953 by another "group of young writers," (mostly students of Hebrew literature at Jerusalem's Hebrew University), noted in their manifesto "the weighty responsibility" they felt in the face of Israel's "new reality" during the early fifties. Their struggle, as they saw it, was with

individual perplexities . . . the lack of a firmly rooted cultural tradition . . . the partisan atmosphere . . . the crisis of immigrant absorption . . . the loss of real contact between the honest work [of literature] and the reader [and] the lack of understanding on the part of veteran writers.

Especially disturbing for the editors of *Likrat* was their conviction that the old-guard Hebrew writers never really recovered from the shock of the Yishuv's transition to sovereign statehood and, hence, "have not contributed a single new word to our literature" since the War of Independence in 1948. For *Likrat*, therefore, relevance meant confronting an historically imposed "new reality" (here we have an echo of *Moznayim's* manifesto), an unfamiliar, still vaguely-shaped socio-cultural milieu which, in itself, constituted a mandate for change in aesthetic expression.

In 1955, a few years after *Likrat's* manifesto, a similarly resounding statement of social consciousness introduced the first—and only—issue of *Akhsanaya* ("Forum"), edited by the late publicist, Shlomo Grodzensky, and the poet-critics Ezra Sussman (recently deceased), and Nathan Sach. One of the goals they mentioned was to provide an avenue of expression for literature of better quality—more "personal, spontaneous, responsible"—than what had been appearing "amid the tumult of the daily press." *Akhsanaya's* basic philosophy of literature was, however, the Marxian view that literature, along with all other aspects of human endeavor, was to be measured by its socially utilitarian function. The artist-writer, therefore, was bound to emerge from, and respond and contribute to, his social context:

A journal for belles-lettres alone is not possible today [especially] in our society which is being constructed out of the remnants of shattered and destroyed worlds and in a world constantly threatened by extinction. . . . The unique and sole right to existence which the humanist has is to observe, to think, to analyze, to question, to feel. . . . This role . . . is surely the unique, the ideal social contribution of literature.

Unlike *Likrat* and *Akhsanya*, *Siman Kria* is quite ambiguous in demonstrating any similar sort of socially-oriented philosophy. What it does propose is to meet the "needs" of its contemporary audience by providing its readers with examples of good taste. (The phrase *Siman Kria* need not be rendered "exclamation point"; it may also be translated, the editors note, as "an indication of what to read.") The new journal's basic loyalty to the reading public is, therefore, mainly an aesthetic act; but its promise to present more "realistic" fiction—the essence of its aesthetic viewpoint—remains unfulfilled in this first issue. The three prose works published here are neither more nor less "realistic" or "relevant," either in their content or in their language, than much of the younger mainstream fiction published over the last twenty years. Not only does *Siman Kria* seem to overlook the historical and aesthetic facts of Israeli literary "realism" since 1948, but it also reflects no definitive historical consciousness, other than to state a rather vague intention of moving in an entirely new aesthetic direction. Hence, both claims, the social and the aesthetic, seem to fly in the face of historical and literary realities; and since both claims have been stated before, under various auspices, a certain measure of *déjà vu* is inescapable.

What, then, is unique in *Siman Kria*? What is distinctive in its self-view? What model do its editors have in mind when they assert that "the contemporary Israeli literary scene . . . has no journal fashioned to meet its needs or the needs of its readers"? And what motivates the effort to issue this type of literary magazine, with such grandiose literary aims and high aesthetic standards, at this point in time?

A partial answer is to be found in *Siman Kria*'s manifesto, in the section on criticism. Echoing again the argument for a literature directly responsive to contemporary needs, the editors' quarrel with Israel's literary critics is, in the main, that "they have increasingly cut themselves off from the living literature." Unlike the Russian Formalists and the New Critics in their respective times, the editors declare, most Israeli critics have not "asked the questions which are important for and relevant to literature [but only] those which are of interest solely in the small, confined world of the scholar."

Aside from their vaguely democratic aim, these remarks actually reveal a key motivating factor in the founding of the new journal: To a great degree, *Siman Kria* seems to have been established as a complement to (or antidote for) *Hasifrut* ("Literature"), Israel's leading jour-

nal for the study of literature, founded in 1968 and edited by Professor Benjamin Hrushovski. Self-proclaimed in its manifesto as "the first [journal] of its kind in Hebrew" (note the similarity in tone to *Siman Kria's* opening statement), *Hasifrut* saw itself as beginning "a new stage in Israeli literary study." It would dedicate itself, not to "the criticism of current literature . . . journalism or ideology," but to a high, "international" standard of study in the fields of Hebrew literature and poetics. The Hebrew reader, *Hasifrut* hoped, would "learn that studying the details of literary works can be more important, more meaningful, and more interesting than currently accepted generalizations on literature and writers." But *Hasifrut's* stated primary aim, "serving the progress of scientific study," appears to have aroused considerable alarm in the literary community concerning the isolation of literature from the common interests of the reading public. *Siman Kria's* manifesto reflects this apprehension in its clear warning of the danger that the present generation of Israeli intellectuals might suffer alienation from the world of Hebrew literature, its study and its appreciation:

A generation of young people who think about literature has ceased to ponder literary value, literary taste, and the literary mode of expression. [The result has been an accumulation of] verbiage on works of literature, without any responsibility toward the specific-essential [aspect] of the work being discussed, and without any attention paid to its literary-cultural context.

In these remarks *Siman Kria* does, indeed, demand a more humanistic, socio-cultural perspective on literature and reading; it even evinces a quasi-moralistic emphasis on probing art's "essence" and evaluating its "meaning." However, "responsibility," as the editors use the term, seems to connote a notion of relevance that is quite ambivalent. On the one hand, at several points in the manifesto the editors underscore the writer's accountability to his immediate social environment, to his audience, to his "literary-cultural context"—a point of view parallel, in essence, to *Likrat's* and *Akhsanya's* agitation for social awareness. On the other hand, for *Siman Kria*, in its totality, relevance apparently means aesthetic transvaluation for its own sake or for the sake of impelling literary or linguistic development—a philosophy parallel, in essence, to *Hasifrut's* demand for high standards of literary study in the name of meaningfulness.

Evidently, *Siman Kria* is attempting to don two caps at once: one of social consciousness, and one of aesthetic progressiveness. Although these roles are to be shared, the former is mainly the responsibility of the critic in his interpretive work, and the latter mainly the responsibility of the writer in his creative work. However, this journal's basic loyalty is still aesthetic; for the editors go on to state that "*Siman Kria* has consciously limited its publication of research and criticism in deference

to literature which can and must stand at the center of the literary experience of today's writers and readers." It seems obvious, too, that the brunt of these remarks is again directed at *Hasifrut's* assumption of a "purely scientific role."

Two additional motivating factors are evident in the founding of *Siman Kria*: the revival of a journalistic model to fulfill all the variegated roles of literary presentation to the Israeli reader; and the need simply to create more publishing space for works by younger writers. The choice of models—I use the phrase in the sense of spiritual continuity within a literary tradition—is clearly *Akhshav* ("Now"), founded in 1959 and defunct since 1968. It is no accident that *Siman Kria's* initial issue includes the first installment of reminiscences on *Akhshav's* founding and history; and two poets, David Avidan and Ory Bernstein, formerly involved closely with *Akhshav*, are now major contributors to *Siman Kria*. Moreover, the new journal's manifesto parallels, in outline at least, the editorial comments that appeared in *Akhshav's* first issue. The second factor is one of literary economics: for various aesthetic and ideological reasons the existing channels are deemed inadequate, and *Siman Kria* hopes to offer more prestigious space for up-and-coming Israeli writers, the group it purports to represent.

Thus, the appearance of *Siman Kria* reflects a combination of journalistic, social, and literary ingredients: "economic," in the sense of fulfilling the need for additional breathing room for younger writers; "political," in the sense of offering these writers and their readers, alike, a unified front and an organ for more effective expression; and "aesthetic," in the sense of promising to publish more refreshing (or avant-garde), more realistic (or relevant) original works, to print criticism which is analytic and yet more palatable to the general reader, and to present Hebrew translations of "modern classics."

Siman Kria's translations policy, discussed at length in the manifesto, demonstrates that the journal intends not merely "to acquaint Hebrew readers with the modern classics of world literature." Its main goal is language oriented: to make Hebrew itself more flexible, "to free it," as the editorial puts it, "from the Mendelev-Berkowitz-Shlonsky tradition of exaggerated linguistic purism" (pejoratively referred to as *meliza*). Although the new translations which appear in this issue—selections from Woolf, Faulkner, and Richard Brautigan—really do not go very far in liberating Hebrew from its euphuistic chains, they firmly convey both the continuation of this "liberal," culturally broadening tradition in Hebrew literary journalism and the ever-sharper turning toward Western European and American works of an innovative character. Significantly, too, the journal contains an announcement of *Siman Kria Publications*, which plans to publish an extensive list of translated works,

including novels by Gide, Nabokov, Fitzgerald, Lowry, Genet, Updike, and Grass.

Its declared intent of focusing on belles-lettres notwithstanding, *Siman Kria* allots only 40 pages to poetry (though eleven poets in a wide-ranging selection are presented) and 130 pages, more than one-third the journal's space, to criticism of various sorts. Ironically, some of these essays are highly specialized and resemble the academic articles so characteristic of *Hasifrut*. But, since most deal quite readably with contemporary writings—including close readings of works by Gabriel Preil, David Vogel, Nathan Sach, and A. B. Yehoshua—they are genuinely useful aids for the sophisticated reading and proper understanding of the authors and works they discuss. In any case, both the proportion of critical essays and another announcement of several projected volumes of criticism under the aegis of Siman Kria Publications demonstrate the editors' central preoccupation with poetics, in spite of their stated preference for literature over criticism.

In several aspects of its first issue, especially in its pronouncements of self-definition, *Siman Kria* seems to be caught in the vortex of the games journals play. Its overstated, outdated nihilism and its self-indulgent mouthings serve only to create a tone of empty competitiveness which conflicts with the editors' own dedication to improving the quality of contemporary Hebrew language and literature. One might have hoped that the manifesto of *this* journal would have reflected a more measured self-consciousness as well as a more sensitive awareness of journalistic history and tradition, without necessarily sacrificing its serious—or even its revolutionary—sense of purpose.

Fortunately, however, most of the shortcomings discernible in *Siman Kria's* introductory issue remain within the realm of the peripheral. In view of its generally outstanding literary and critical offerings and the great promise of future issues and of its accompanying publications enterprise, *Siman Kria* stands suddenly, but clearly, at the center of literary activity in Israel. It should surely be given regular attention by all who are interested in the current ambience of Modern Hebrew Literature.

A Midrash on Jewish Mourning

JOEL B. WOLOWELSKY

THE PROBLEM OF RECONCILING GOD'S ATTRIBUTES

with the realities of human existence has been troubling Jewish thinkers for centuries. One of its most famous Talmudic formulations is to be found in an *aggadita* in *Yoma* (69b) :

Moses said: God is great, mighty and awesome. Jeremiah said: Gentiles are trampling in His Temple; where is His awesomeness? He would no longer say "awesome." Daniel said: Gentiles have enslaved His children; where is His might? He would no longer say "mighty." They [the *Anshei Knesset Hagedolah* (the men of the Great Assembly)] came and said: On the contrary! It is the culmination of His might that He represses His inclination to act and is long-suffering toward the wicked. And if He were not awesome, how could one nation [the Jews] endure among the nations of the world?

The midrashic techniques used here point to an approach to the problem. Since Jeremiah and Daniel—and not some *apikores* (heretic) — raise the question, the "heretical" arguments cannot be dismissed *ad hominem*. Moreover, by choosing Jeremiah, the point is made that we are dealing, not with an intellectual problem, but with an existential crisis. Jeremiah, after all, knew that the *hurban* was coming; he was intellectually prepared for it. Yet he was shaken when forced to confront that which he had probably come to terms with on an intellectual level.

It is important to note, also, that neither Jeremiah nor Daniel actively attacked the traditional formulation of God's attributes. Daniel did not substitute "weak" for "mighty." He simply stood aside and would not say what seemed to him to be false.

Finally, the fact should not be overlooked that no one approached Jeremiah or Daniel with a proposed solution to his "religious problems" at the time when each faced his challenge. Only after a lapse of more than half a century did anyone react—and even then there was no real solution proposed. The representatives of the community (and not merely some individual) simply affirmed the paradox of life: while there is no denying the forcefulness of the question, other dimensions of life call on us to affirm our commitments.

The *aggadita* ends on an interesting note. How, it asks, even in the light of the undeniable facts of human existence, could these two challenge a formulation of God's attributes that dates back to Moses himself?

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R. Eleazar said: They knew that God was truthful; therefore, they would not ascribe false things to Him.

While there are many interpretations that can be given to this Talmudic discussion, I would like to suggest that it may be seen as a midrash on *shivah* and many of the mourning customs. It provides us with an orientation within which we may understand many of the details of traditional Jewish practice in this area.

Death is, to be sure, an intellectual problem. After all, why do people die when they do? There seems to be neither rhyme nor reason. Yet the real challenge of death is, in essence, an existential one. Those who "lose faith" following the death of a close relative or friend are usually not upset to the same extent by the death of a stranger, even though the intellectual problem is the same, irrespective of who dies. Rather, like Jeremiah, the mourner suddenly confronts the grim reality of what he might very well have known to be coming. Life suddenly becomes meaningless.

Following the dictum of R. Eleazar, the halakhah insists that the mourner truthfully acknowledge the reality of his crisis. Like Jeremiah and Daniel, he should refrain from acting out a commitment that he cannot then feel; he is freed from the *mizvot aseh*. But, at the same time, the mourner must refrain from lashing out by denying the norms of his community as reflected in the halakhah; he remains bound by the *mizvot lo ta-aseh*. R. Eleazar insisted that one not try to beguile God; the halakhah insists that the *onen* not try to deceive himself. Should he indicate his desire to pray despite his confrontation with death, one dissuades him; if he persists, he will not be counted in a minyan.

This attitude of integrity and honesty is imposed not only on the mourners but on the community as a whole. Thus, when paying a *shivah* call, the comforter should realize that he is no better than the contemporaries of Jeremiah and Daniel. This is not an intellectual crisis and there is no point in offering "answers." As to responding to the existential problem—what can even the most eloquent person say when the wound is so deep? Hence, when entering a *beit avel*, one may not say anything to the mourner. (Although, of course, the visitor may respond to anything the mourner says to him.) When one has nothing to say, it is best to say nothing.

But, despite the realization that one can offer no rational response, one may—indeed, must—come to comfort the mourner. Such a coming testifies to an existential—not necessarily rational—commitment that this crisis will be overcome. "Actions speak louder than words." Perhaps the mourner will draw strength from those members of his community who come to sustain him.

If the mourner is not open to comfort, the comforter will leave in silence—except that before departing, he will say "*Hamakom yinahem*

etkhem. . . .” At first glance, this phrase seems out of place. All along, those who have come to console refrain from giving false answers, yet suddenly they recite a conventional phrase—and there is no denying that it is conventional. Yet it is this quality of the phrase that justifies its being said. As an individual, a comforter can say nothing. However, the Jewish community, by its very existence, can testify that death does not mean the end of life. Notice how the *Anshei Knesset Hagedolah*—those who embodied the Jewish community and not some individual—justified the awesomeness of God. If, after all, the Jewish people is still here, then God must, indeed, be awesome. If, for centuries, Jews have been saying “*Hamakom* . . .” in response to death, then, even though as an individual one has nothing to say, there is a good chance that life will be justified. If the phrase had not been incorporated into the Tradition, the comforter should not have the *huzpah* to say anything so standardized. But the “silent” *shivah* call which is concluded with the traditionally formulated sentence “*Hamakom* . . .” becomes the community’s solution to a different dilemma: how can the individual be true to his obligation to respond honestly to both the crisis of the *avel* and to the community’s—and his own—existential commitment that this crisis can, and will, be overcome.

The current custom of filling in a grave likewise reflects an attempt to deal with two opposing obligations. Of course, there is the obligation of *kibbud hamet*; the dead person has a right to be buried as a being originally created *bezelem elokim*, not as a box of bones. On the other hand, the *avelim* have a right to put this event behind them as soon as possible, to stop dwelling on the encounter with death, to get out of the cemetery and to begin building a new life. (Of course, there is no leaving the cemetery until the grave is filled and kaddish said, no escaping the confrontation with death, no remembering the dead person “as he was.” A healthy readjustment requires an acceptance of the reality and finality of death.) Thus, when those present begin to fill in the grave, they shovel with the back of the blade—slowly, deliberately. No rushing here, as when filling in a hole. However, as soon as the casket is covered, one shovels quickly. There is no unnecessary prolonging of the *avelim*’s stay. But even at this point the diggers must realize their obligation to treat this as a human’s grave. Shovels are not passed to one another but, rather, put down and picked up by the next user; and, when the grave has been filled, an extra second or two is taken to add a mound—something that would not be done when merely shoveling dirt into a hole.

As the burial service draws to a close, we witness a strange event. Tension has been building up in the mourners for hours, throughout the funeral service and culminating in the saying of kaddish at the graveside. But, as the *avelim* leave, those present line up and say

"*Hamakom . . .*" to them. Even if we can appreciate the legitimacy of the phrase at the conclusion of the *shivah* call, this moment of departure from the freshly-covered grave appears to be a most insensitive time and place to attempt to offer consolation. Further, lining up seems to be little more than an empty formalism. Yet this increased ceremonialism is an expression of the fact that the integrity of the consolation varies inversely with the intensity of the moment. As in the case of a *shivah* call, the individual realizes that there is nothing to be said, despite the fact that he wishes to say something. But at the very moment when the enormity of the crisis strikes the mourner it is improper to say even a traditional phrase. Before saying anything, one must emphasize that it is the community that is speaking; one may comfort only as part of a minyan lined up to form a religious fellowship. It is the fact that all line up that gives integrity to the moment. Even when we, as individuals, must be silent we should be modest enough to admit that the Jewish community might yet be privileged to speak.

The concept that it is not the individual who offers consolation but, rather, the community is reflected in a more subtle way in the "Meal of Consolation" usually eaten upon return from the cemetery. This meal may not be prepared from the mourner's food and is customarily provided by a non-relative. When he returns from the cemetery, eating is the furthest thing from the *avel's* mind. But eating is a commitment to life, and it is a member of the community who comes to the mourner with food to eat. It is the beginning of the *shivah* experience: encountering people who, as individuals, have nothing to say, but who express, through their actions, their commitment that as members of a community they might offer consolation and encouragement to go on living.

Unfortunately, the idea that God is truthful and demands a sincere reaction from all is sometimes lost in the American Way of Death. There is an unfortunate tendency to deny the reality of death, to dress up the corpse to look like a "sleeping" person, to play "soothing" music, to cut a ribbon instead of a garment—as if at such a time the cost of a garment could be a real concern. The condolence call becomes a social visit, with the mourners feeling an obligation to "entertain" their "guests" and the visitors thinking that trite phrases of condolences or pat theodicies actually have significance. This superficial approach deserves reconsideration on the part of a people committed to truth and to a God of truthfulness.

I. J. Schwartz's Kentucky: The Americanization of "The Grandchildren of Wander"

GERTRUDE W. DUBROVSKY

ISRAEL JACOB SCHWARTZ, BORN IN THE LITTLE Lithuanian town of Petrashani, came to America in 1906 and, for a while, he earned his living as a Hebrew teacher while enrolled in a highschool in New York. In 1918, at the invitation of his sister, the young poet and his young family moved to Lexington, Kentucky. Out of this experience came his book of poems called *Kentucky*. It was written in chapters between the years 1918 and 1922, and published serially in the Yiddish journal *Zukunft*. In 1925 it was issued as a book. It became the first important work in a new chapter of Yiddish literary history which might be called the American Experience.

In the central poem, "New Earth," Schwartz, speaking of the early American pioneers and frontiersmen, writes:

The first pioneers who
Cut their dreadful way through
The western side of Virginia and reached
The fertile region of the blue grass
Were truly heroes.
It was the striving of human nature,
The eagerness to discover new land,
Which drove the pioneers on
To cut through the huge spiral mountains.

The poet sees these people as the recognizable brothers and sisters of the immigrants to America, who also had to "cut their dreadful way through." It was the same "striving of human nature" which drove them on. Schwartz writes,

When Boone discovered
The rich soil of Kentucky
He immediately sent . . . to his brother
And all his relatives with the words . . .
"Come, let's settle this paradise."

In the same way, the immigrants arriving in America immediately sent word back to Europe, "Come." And, like the pioneers, they came, old and young, men, women, "children, with thin pinched faces, and open eager eyes"—the grandchildren of wander—the immigrants to America. They arrived at their relatives' homes with their "large packs of old

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bedding, two brass candlesticks, pudding pans, bulging yellow samovar," and their dreams for a new life.

Kentucky offers, among other things, a miniature history of the immigrant experience in America and of the Americanization of these "grandchildren of wander."

The journey started in Europe, in the *shtetlakh*. There the dream first took shape, with the help of letters from relatives already here about the glories of the new country: there was much food in America—bread every day, meat to spare, even in the middle of the week. And to prove the point, pictures of fat children and well-dressed parents accompanied the letters. Schwartz writes:

And the skinny shriveled relatives
Who ate black bread
And watery potatoes in their skins
Hunggrily started to dream
Of distant seas and of the rich land.

But even as he dreamed, the relative in Europe knew that "the pretty pictures of the dressed-up bull dogs" did not tell the whole story. He also knew very well that "There, in the new distant world, he will be/Dragging himself around someplace with a pack,/Or basting trousers in a factory." And even more significant, he knew that the new country broke a centuries-old pattern of Jewish life: "In Columbus's country/It is not a sin to work on Saturday." Thus, the departure of a person from his home was accompanied by a mixture of joy and grief, anticipation and dread. Not only did the emigre have to say goodbye to loved ones whom he was leaving forever, but he also was breaking from a traditional way of life which had sustained him and his forebears for hundreds of years. He made promises to himself, to God, to others, to keep the traditions alive and meaningful, but, as he knew deep down, the promises evaporated with the salt air of the ocean trip.

After leaving home, the immigrants, many of whom had never been more than a few miles away from their small towns, had to face the journey across Europe, "dragging themselves across Germany, Holland, Belgium," expending their energies, depleting their very meager resources, coping with the complex business of foreign customs regulations, frightened everywhere by hostile attitudes, seeking boat passage in "all the harbor cities:/Hamburg, Bremen, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam." Then there was the crossing itself. They "traveled on the sea for months on end . . . and, while still alive, met the angel of death./When the green sea was turbulent, . . . then, together with the mice, they crawled into a black, damp hole."

Enduring the frightful crossing, the immigrant often arrived alone in "the maelstrom of New York" where further hardships had to be endured and overcome. There was New York itself, the city, whose multi-

tudes and constantly shifting sights painfully intensified a feeling of alienation. And indeed, many immigrants, having left behind their wives and small children, to be sent for at some future time, suffered the most excruciating loneliness and despair. Like Joshua, the protagonist of the central poem in *Kentucky*, they feared they had left their children orphans. Driven by a desperate sense of urgency, they subjected themselves to inhuman working conditions. Joshua "tailored for fifteen long hours a day" living in "a narrow hole," feeling stifled and suffocated, feeling his skin shrivel without a drop of air, feeling death breathing over his shoulder. He was one of many who could not adjust to the dehumanizing effect of New York, and to its heartless materialism. With a pack on his back, he set out on foot to find the open spaces of America.

He was one of a legion of Jewish peddlers who "measured Columbus's country step-by-step." Although they found, at last, an open sky, the hardship of the road replaced the hardship of the city.

The old trails run far and wide,
And it is far from one farm to the other.
. . . Joe walks with back bent,
The pack, heavy as a mountain—
A tremendous harsh mountain—
Growing on his back. And it presses.
In the summer, the heat burns and roasts him alive,
And burns into him with red-hot spears,
In the winter the frost is piercing and the wind cutting,
The cold snow lashes and blinds the eyes.

In addition to the crushing physical burden, the peddlers carried their isolation and desperation with them:

. . . there is no common speech.
And so the great sorrow speaks mutely,
The loneliness in the teary eyes,
The deep creases around the pale lips,
The lament of the red, swollen hands.

And there were other pressures. Some people received them kindly, but others set hostile dogs on them. Their food was meager. Mindful of the religious injunction against eating pork, they tried to observe their dietary laws and, turning down offers of non-kosher food, subsisted on dried black bread and salted onions. Praying, they become objects of curiosity to astonished provincials. Sometimes familiar prayer melodies become the peddler's only companions, as they were to Joe, until his human needs for companionship and sex forced him into an untimely and unfortunate marriage with a Christian girl. Joe did not endure. But some of those who did, rose up the economic ladder and moved from peddling to positions of power and influence in the community.

Schwartz's Joshua is typical of those who succeeded. Yet the Christian world begrudged him his success. Joshua is bitterly reminded of his

previous impoverished condition by his new Christian relative whom he acquires when his son marries.

Do you, at least, remember how you came here?
 A beggar, a gypsy, tattered,
 Who wandered down all the roads
 Thin, emaciated, with a load on your back.
 And now you are fat, Josh, and smooth
 With houses and warehouses and mazuma—
 . . .

A half of the city belongs to you already.
 I would say that you, at least, should be appreciative,
 Should be thankful for your good fortune . . .

But more insidious than the jealousy of the Christian neighbors was the Americanization process, accompanied by the break-down, within the Jewish family, of traditional values and life-styles. These were replaced too often by pseudo-Christian practices and bourgeois values.

As business assumed increasingly a more and more central place in the lives of the immigrants, the practice of religion became more and more burdensome. Indeed, rather than resting on the Sabbath, "one worked on the Sabbath/Even harder than on the week-day,/Because on Saturday people got their wages." The Sabbath began to assume "a common day atmosphere," and soon the immigrants were able to adapt to the Christian Sunday as a day of rest. Prayer books, at first read religiously every Friday night, were soon forgotten on the shelves and ultimately discarded in some forgotten corner of an attic.

Schwartz makes clear that the substitution of the American dream of success exacted a huge price from the immigrant and made him often selfish and materialistic, a person unlike the traditional concept of *mentsh*. The poet can understand how mercenary attitudes developed:

A person who drags the heavy pack on himself
 And his feet swell like blocks,
 And he has to deal with dogs and angry Gentiles—
 Or someone who is confined in dust
 From early dawn until late at night
 And bangs nails in old soles—
 Such a man knows what a penny means.

But he does not like what he sees happening. Nor does he like the emphasis on the power of money. In America, success is equated with an ability to buy.

The new country violated old traditions, perverted old values, changed familiar obligations and responsibilities, and created a deep distance between parents and children. As the father grows cold and indifferent to the faith, the children become completely disassociated from it, and eventually from their parents. "New winds" supplant the earliest impressions, the Hebrew words the children might have known are forgotten, their Yiddish tongues stiffen, and they can no longer com-

municate with their parents. Nor do they get any more Jewish education than the haphazard visits of an itinerant rabbi who tries "to drum into the heads of the Maxies and the Hymies" the prayer melodies of the week.

Adopting eagerly the current fashions of their Christian friends, the children grow estranged from the old roots. Southern attitudes solidify, rooted and strengthened in the secular schools which the children attend. "A Negro is a Negro, and that's that!" says the young Jacob. Together with his Christian friends, he plays tricks designed to terrify black children. Among those born in the South, "none needed to become Americanized," Schwartz notes, somewhat sardonically.

Almost without his noticing, Joshua becomes rooted in the soil; but, simultaneously, also without his awareness, the roots were being threatened by the American experience. He, like many others, "laid thick foundations" for his business, but ignored the foundations of his traditions. Typically, the concentration on business and the growing indifference to faith led to a turning away by the second generation from their "strange" parents and customs. The children moved away, physically and psychologically, often mocking their parents at the same time.

But with the third generation, Joshua's grandchildren, there is a turning back—a turning back to the roots—literally and metaphorically. Flora, the child of a mixed marriage, marries a rabbi. David, the character closest to the Judaic ideal, becomes a farmer. He finds dignity through his work on the soil and discovers anew the wisdom of the ancient sages who "exercised an influence over him,/Which prevented him from adapting/To the easy, familiar life-styles."

Although Schwartz sees the American experience as being in many ways inimical to traditional Judaism, he is not completely pessimistic about the future. Joshua's endorsement of his grandson's plan for farming is accompanied by the confident remark: "Oh, what good apples we are going to eat."

Besides offering a miniature history of the Jewish immigrant experience in rural America, *Kentucky* presents a social history of distinct cultures, sub-cultures, and social groups interacting with each other. While the central poem, "New Earth," essentially talks of the Americanization of the immigrant Jew, Schwartz also considers the different groups in the immigrants' new milieu. As the narratives develop, groups become identified in certain specific ways.

The cultures and subcultures of Kentucky are: (1) Jewish, with the subcategories Eastern European and German, and (2) Christian, with the subcategories black and white.

From the beginning, the Jewish immigrant is identified with a business which he carries—an onerous burden—on his back, and with rituals which mark the rhythm of his life. His inner richness is in contrast to

his outer poverty; his faith gives him the strength and courage to go on. As he strives to become established in a scrap-business, there is a rhythm between the banging in the yard during the week and the chanting of prayers on the holy Sabbath.

The Jew is pictured as the man of the book, the symbol of his tradition. As soon as the first home is established, the poet calls attention to the prayer books which occupy an important place therein. In addition to the books, there are decorations of a religious nature, pictures of pious ancestors, and the Sabbath candles. As Joshua moves further and further from tradition, his home loses its religious character. The prayer books are replaced by secular books "in elegant bindings." Books are still very much in the picture.

The German Jew is closely associated with money. Cash jingles in his hand, and chains jingle on his vest. It is he who made the word "mazuma famous for the people" in America. Invariably, the German Jews smoke big, thick, smelly cigars. By contrast, the Christians, black and white, always smoke pipes, and the Litvaks roll their own cigarettes. As Joshua becomes more affluent, he also smokes big cigars.

From the first introduction of the black, he is associated with music and dancing. Spontaneously, a black will break into a dance at work, or a song at home. The blacks' church is filled with their fervent singing; they strum on banjos, play on combs, bang on cymbals, whistle tunes. And the blacks who worked for Jews enjoyed the Psalms and the melodies which itinerant rabbis tried to teach to Jewish children.

With a love of music comes a certain humor that animates the otherwise impoverished lives of the black George Washington, his wife, and friends. Humor, and an ability to be in touch with feelings, especially among themselves. The blacks laugh heartily, cry unashamedly, pray fervently, and suffer intensely. Where the whites in *Kentucky* have repressed their feelings, the blacks seem to confront them, even when suffering the tortures of the damned.

The blacks are also associated with oppression and victimization. They burn at the stake, a white rope around their necks, are beaten to a pulp, are driven by whips and chains, are hunted down like animals. The nightly lament of women whose cries "pierce the heart like spears" is never far behind the music.

As the Jew is associated with business and tradition, and the black with music and persecution, the white Christian is associated with violence and aggression from the very beginning. His primary symbol is the gun, sometimes alternating with the whip or the knife. The first view that Joshua gets of the Christian is as a man with a gun, a threatening man who brings a burning lantern right up to the poor Jew's eyes, and then locks him up in the barn.

Subsequently, the white Southern Christian appears in other ag-

gressive roles. He is the hunter bringing his bloody booty to the Jew, a knife stuck in his belt; the farmer who comes to trade and carries a whip which he uses to threaten the small boy who has played a trick on him; the pioneer, man or woman, who skillfully shoulders a gun to kill the Indian; the man who rides wildly through the night, shooting as he goes; the man who comes to church with his gun strapped prominently on his saddle; the man who hounds the blacks with gun and whip, who chains them and burns them.

While Schwartz characterizes different groups in *Kentucky* in certain specific ways, he also has some interesting things to say about the way the groups interact. Understandably, the Jew is seen most clearly, both in his own community in which there is real strife between the Eastern European and German Jew, and in the Christian community in which the tension between the two groups is more serious and significant.

The antagonism between the German and Eastern European Jews does, in fact, have a long history in America, which partly accounts for the tone Schwartz uses in talking of the German Jews. In *Kentucky*, he reverses history. Joshua, an Eastern European Jew, is the first to settle in this particular community. He is visited by a German Jew in search of a business and Schwartz makes him seem ludicrous. The attitude of the poet to the German is immediately revealed in his use of the word *daytshl* to characterize the guest. *Daytsh* means German. Adding the diminutive has a pejorative effect, in that it reduces the stature of the man, even as it may indicate a physical characteristic.

When Schwartz describes the settlement of the German Jews in large numbers, the picture is again pejorative. He depicts them as having "shrewd heads and sharp eyes . . . fleshy, twitching noses . . . heavy bodies, good natured bellies/And jangling chains on their vests."

The first Jews to break from tradition, the Germans operated non-kosher butcher shops. They also established dry-goods or linen shops and instituted installment buying among the Polish, Italian, and Slovakian miners. In contrast to the somber Germans, the Litvaks are lively and dynamic. They speak with their hands and eyes as well as with their mouths. Where the Germans are fat, the Litvaks are "underfed, undernourished, their faces green." Where the Germans are essentially businessmen, the Litvaks are essentially craftsmen: tailors, milliners, shoemakers. The Germans opened neat stores, while the Litvaks settled in shacks with small, dusty, broken windows, eating "in the thick dust," drinking "in the thick dust," sleeping "in the thick dust." Where the German Jews stood properly in front of their doors waiting for business, the Litvaks aggressively sought to lure in customers; the pants that they hung outside their shops by way of advertisement hit the passers-by in the face.

Each group keeps strictly to itself. The Germans title the Litvaks "green beggars" and, making "fun of their customs," turn their noses up

at them. But, out of necessity, the groups come together on the High Holy days to pray. As the Jewish community grows larger, the need for a synagogue becomes apparent to the two groups. The Litvaks want a traditional *shul* while the German Jews argue bitterly for a temple with an organ and a girls' choir. Eventually, they settle for a church converted into a more or less traditional synagogue.

Though there is antagonism and a social distance between the German Jews and the Eastern European Jews, the two groups nonetheless do share a religious and cultural heritage which enables them to come together occasionally in spite of differences. But this is not the case with the Jewish immigrants and their Christian neighbors. The distance between the two groups is never bridged in spite of the efforts made.

As the narrator in the dedicatory poem of *Kentucky* is not at one with the land he describes and loves, so the traditional Jew, Joshua, is alien to the land where he sends out new roots, and insecure in the new home he establishes. Poor and helpless when he arrives, Joshua is at the mercy of the local inhabitants. It is his faith that "God will not abandon him either" which sustains him.

As the Jew struggles hard to establish himself in the foreign environment and still maintain his own identity and traditions as a Jew, he finds himself in the familiar dilemma of the Jew in an uncomprehending, if not hostile, Christian world. Joshua is visited by a delegation of farmers, headed by their pastor, to complain of the Jew's practice of working on Sunday and resting on Saturday. The delicacy of the situation is captured by Schwartz as he carefully understates the unmistakable feelings of righteous passion, on the one hand, and fear, on the other, which the confrontation on this issues arouses. The pastor shows "his mastery of the Old Testament,/Mixing it with passages from Luke and from Paul,/And from the other Apostles of the church." The poor Jew, not indifferent to the implications of the visit, can only answer that he respects his old traditions, which follow the Old Testament prescription: "Six days a week you should do your work,/And on the seventh . . . the Sabbath,/You should keep it holy." Assuming a condescending pity, the pastor asks: "Does he not know that Jesus Christ, the Son, . . . abolished the Sabbath . . . and in its place appointed Sunday?" The Jew simply answers that he is not so learned, and thus only follows his father's ways. The conclusion comes in the form of an ominous gift, the Old and New Testament.

When Joshua becomes a financial power in the community, he finds the strength to stand up to the thrusts of the cleric. Invited as a guest into the Jew's house, the pastor still discusses "the Son and the Father/ But now the Jew answers back . . . and maneuvers very closely with the holy verses,/Which aggravates the pastor to death" so that he must run to talk to Joshua's children and ease his heart; they, at least, are impressed by the pastor's Christianity.

One of the major themes of *Kentucky* is the persecution of the blacks. But where the relationship between Jews and white Christians is closely and specifically viewed, the relationship between black and white Christians is given in the most general terms and seen from an objective distance. A black scene is put beside a white scene, but time separates the two. The scene of drunken ex-Confederate soldiers singing and exchanging maudlin toasts to the memory of their comrades-in-arms is interrupted by a flashback to Lincoln arriving in Richmond, met by a sea of blacks in wild jubilation. The juxtaposition creates an unmistakable irony as the scene then returns to the drunken soldiers pouring out praises to Dixie from hot, flaming throats. Lincoln's portrait looks down from the wall of the courthouse while the black is sentenced to die.

Only Jewish ears and eyes perceive the black suffering. But the scenes are indirectly narrated. The sounds of the South reach the ears of the young Jacob, and these sounds include "the nightly drawn-out laments of women," the sounds of blacks begging to be shot while they burn at the stake, the sounds of horses galloping wildly, guns crackling. Vividly, but also indirectly, because it is past history, Joshua's grandson, David, recounts a street scene he had witnessed of a drunken Negro beaten to death because he had accidentally brushed against a white.

While the immigrant Jew is distant from, and alien to, the Christian culture, he feels a close and immediate identification with the blacks. Joshua, seeing the blacks, feels that they are familiar and that they are part of his own past. The blacks also perceive the immigrants as a different kind of white, a non-threatening people: "the Negro . . . on his part . . . sensed that these people were somehow closer to him."

Because Schwartz, as a Jew, identified with the suffering of the blacks, he tends to see the blacks as Jews. He projects his knowledge and feeling for Jewish living into the Negro psyche, the Negro home, and the Negro community. The small, close black world whose spirit and warmth is most clearly seen around the table and in the church is similar to the small closely knit community of the Jewish family, at home and in the synagogue.

In the group of poems about blacks, the only Jew is the pawnbroker, Hebrew Mose, who is condescending in his relationship with his black customers. But Schwartz reduces Mose to a kind of comic figure by writing the scene in which he appears in doggerel.

The Jews in *Kentucky* profited from the blacks' business, but they were not slave holders; they did not hound blacks; they did not burn them or chain them; they did not imprison them. And Jews did not try blacks in mock court rooms; nor did they condemn them, even before trial, to death.

A thematic antithesis of "blossoming and decay" unifies the collection of poems in *Kentucky*. In this antithesis, we find a key to the poet's

dual view of the New World, a reaction to its mixed blessings. The two primary images which Schwartz uses to carry the theme are trees and blood. Trees are associated with growth, productivity, and stability. Although they are subjected to the vagaries of an indifferent nature and must struggle against forces which seek to inhibit them, those that survive branch out, heavy with fruit, magnificently leaved, gloriously crowned "with birds and song." Yet, in the forest, the trees are in a struggle with each other, choking each other, so that the undergrowth smells of death. Blood is associated with injustice, persecution, oppression, and death. It is also ironically associated with fertility and productivity; the flowers of the South have been rooted in blood.

Twice the narrator of "New Earth" describes the land as an exotic, tropical paradise, but then he smells the decay whose aroma mingles with the essence of growth.

The trees bent under the burden
Of red, cool, shining apples
And transparent pink apricots.
The forest was still a forest: braided,
Branched, knotted, clustered, twisted,
And the density smelled of decay,
. . . one plant choked another
And grew out of the other's belly.

The juxtaposition comes to represent the history of the South: the South blossoms, seduces one with its sensuous landscape and fruitfulness; but underneath its surface are violent tensions and death.

The predominant color in the opening and the closing of "New Earth" is red, which is associated with a twilight landscape, but the color is repeated so often that it is impossible to miss the symbolic significance. It is not only an evening landscape tinted red by rays of the setting sun, but it is a world which has assumed this coloration. Schwartz talks of the bloody Civil War, he touches upon the life and death struggle with the red man, the blood-feuds that go on for generations, and, most sinister of all, the blood extracted from the blacks. The original title of "New Earth" was "*Oyfn blutikn grunt*"—"On the Bloody Ground." While the poet wants to associate America with Paradise, he sees it as a world stained by evil almost from its settlement.

Schwartz contrasts the grandeur of the South with the suffering of the black. As Jacob, Joshua's son, grows up, his ears absorb the new sound of the new world—"colorful, strong, gaudy, ringing—/Now tender, soothing and caressing like silk,/Now sharp and raw, brutal and piercing." At the same time he sees life face to face:

[He] saw the red display of wild passion,
Saw the atrocious red fires—
The red expression of man's hate,
Heard the hoof-beats of infuriated horses,

The frightening retort of distant guns,
 The nightly drawn-out laments
 Of women's voices, which pierce
 The heart like sharp thin spears.
 Saw the expression of the wild mob
 On the guilty black man;
 The white rope around the black neck,
 The black face—gray, the mouth clenched,
 The body convulsed in dread of death,
 A small yellow fire smolders at his feet,
 The air is filled with the smell and fumes of burnt flesh.

This grim picture is immediately followed, with obvious irony, by a vision of peace and tranquility:

And (Jacob) also saw the peace and tranquility
 Of the secure and strong young nation:
 The great splendor of the summer market,
 Which drowns in a sea of living flowers
 And dots the face of field and garden with opulence.

Clearly, Schwartz saw the evil existing in the "land of innocence" and he recognized the peace and tranquility for the bitter illusion that it was.

The ideas of persecution and growth, "blossoming and decay," blood and trees, come together in the figure of the Jew who comes with his own blood-drenched history into the blood-drenched South. Explicitly compared to a transplanted tree engaged in a life and death battle with an inhospitable soil, Joshua takes root and, blossoming, prospers. But his prosperity literally rests on blood. Not only does he deal with bloody hides for his living, but the death of his child is a kind of blood sacrifice for his business.

The fruitfulness and death which Schwartz sees in the physical landscape and in the social structure of the South finds its parallel in the "landscape" and social structure of the Jewish immigrants about whom he writes. As the poet observes the confrontation of the Old World and the New, he responds to, and, indeed, participates in, the excitement engendered by that confrontation; the outburst of energy and creativity, the movement toward expanding frontiers, and the upward mobility of the poor immigrants. Yet, Schwartz knows that the price for all this is grievous for the Jews. Indeed, it is nothing less than the annihilation of the past and the sacrifice of the specific Jewish character of life.

Kentucky is one of the most American works in the whole of Yiddish literature because Schwartz identified himself so completely with the American landscape, its variety, its rich colors, its nuances, its hills and valleys. Alfred Kazin has written that the secret of Southern writing is the intense sense of the earth and the superb registering of country sights and sounds.¹ Certainly the earth registered with Schwartz. Somehow, the fields of the blue grass country went into his very bones. With the South-

1. R. Warren, ed., *Faulkner* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1966), p. 149.

ern landscape, Schwartz also absorbed the sense of its particular history. He saw a pastoral landscape seething with violent energies, an apparently placid society with profound tensions and inner divisions, and a moral reality ultimately malevolent.

Reacting to the historic predicament of the South, Schwartz touches upon the very themes that Faulkner was to develop later.² As in Faulkner, blood and evil are everywhere, mixing with the warmth and opulence of the South. And Schwartz also writes, however briefly, of the conflict attending the transition from one way of life to another, of the break-up of an old order, undermined from within by the decadence of its values, and its replacement by an ambiguous and uncertain new order.

In so far as *Kentucky* offers an immigrant's view of the American South and speaks of a chapter in Jewish American history, it is a valuable social document. With a poet's insight, Schwartz relates the story of the immigrants who left the large urban centers and dispersed throughout the country. He tells of how they accepted the challenge of America, how they internalized its values, how they experienced its problems.

America stretched "wide, open, free" in front of Schwartz. A world of possibility, it was in contrast to the closed world of the *shtetl*. The poet is genuine in his rhapsodic celebration of America; but his celebration does not blind him to the shadows.

Schwartz is no polemicist and *Kentucky* is not intended as social protest. It is a book of poetry, somewhat uneven in quality. Whitman said of *Leaves of Grass*: "In the midst of all, it gives one man's—the author's—identity, ardors, observations, faiths, and thoughts."³ The same can be said of Schwartz's *Kentucky*. As Whitman abandoned conventional themes and sang "quite solely with reference to America,"⁴ so did Schwartz. He, too, reflected on "themes and things, old and new, in the lights thrown on them by the advent of America and democracy."⁵ With *Kentucky*, Schwartz has given to America a Yiddish poet's view of the New World. It is a work that deserves to be more widely known.

2. Faulkner's first book, *Soldier's Pay*, was published in 1925, three years after *Kentucky* was finished.

3. P. Miller, ed., *Major Writers of America* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1962), Vol. I, p. 1107.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

Judah Monis, The Harvard Convert

ARTHUR A. CHIEL

IN JUNE, 1720, THE CORPORATION OF HARVARD College was in receipt of a proposal: that it publish, for the use of its students, a Hebrew Grammar. "Having made an Essay to facilitate the Instruction of Youth in the Hebrew Language," wrote the proponent, "I make bold to present it, to your Judicious perusall." He further indicated that his manuscript was ready for the press. It had the endorsement of a number of learned churchmen. Nevertheless, the author was completely willing to incorporate any improvements that the "Reverend Gentlemen" of the Corporation might recommend. The communication, couched in the characteristic humility of a petitioner, was signed: *Judah Monis*.¹

But Harvard College authorities did not immediately act upon Judah Monis' proposal. In fact, the Corporation would wait a full fifteen years after 1720 before it finally implemented the Grammar's publication. A measure of satisfaction did, nonetheless, accrue to Judah Monis in that Harvard soon conferred upon him the degree of M.A. in recognition of his erudition. Monis' particular sponsor was Benjamin Colman, minister of Boston's Brattle Street Church and an important Harvard personage. Colman, completely taken with Monis, wrote of him at the beginning of their friendship:

He is truly read and learned in the Jewish cabbala and Rabbins, a Master and Critic in the Hebrew. He reads, speaks, writes and interprets it with great readiness and accuracy and is truly apt to teach. His diligence and industry, together with his ability is manifest unto many.

In Colman's estimation, Monis had even more to commend him to Harvard, in "his knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments . . . which he adorns with laudable conversation."

Judah Monis, a Venetian Jew, was obviously beginning to hint to Colman that with a bit of encouragement he might find his way into the Christian fold. And what a potential victory that must have represented to Colman. Only two years had passed from the time of Monis' arrival in Boston and he was prepared to be baptized. Hannah Adams,

1. Judah Monis had come to America about 1715, settling in New York for several years. The records of that city for the period reveal that Monis was a merchant of sorts and that he was admitted a freeman in 1716. There is no indication that he served the Jewish community in any religious capacity. That he was unsuccessful in his mercantile enterprise is attested by the fact that he left New York for Boston in 1720, where this essay picks up his subsequent career at Harvard.

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an early historian of New England, was certain that the Hebrew instructorship vacancy at Harvard and the combined blandishments of clergy friends, Benjamin Colman, Harvard's President John Leverett and Increase Mather, all gave impetus to Monis' decision to convert. The dramatic event itself took place on March 27, 1722.

Yesterday (reported the *New England Courant*), the learned and ingenious Mr. Judah Monis, sometime Rabbi of the Synagogue in Jamaica, and afterwards in New York, who commenced *Mashkil Venavon*,² (sic) in the Jewish Academies of Leghorn and Amsterdam, &c., made a publick Profession of the Christian Religion, and was baptised here by the Rev. Mr. Appleton. The Rev. Mr. Colman, before the Baptism entertain'd the Audience with an excellent Discourse upon John 5.46. *For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me.*

According to the *Courant*

the Rabbi followed this with a learned Discourse, answering from the holy Scriptures and their own approved Authors, Nine of the chief Arguments brought by modern Jews to prove that the Messiah is not yet come. He introduced his Discourse with those words, Psal. 116.10. *I believed, therefore have I spoken; I was greatly afflicted;* and concluded with a Profession of his Faith in the Messiah already come.

The *Courant* reported that "The Solemnity was attended in the Common-Hall at Harvard College, by a considerable part of the Church in this Town, and as numerous an Assembly as the place would admit."

The event, in the reckoning of Monis' sponsors, was so significant that a permanent memorial of the occasion was printed. In short order, a small volume was published by Daniel Henchman of Boston. It included a preface by Increase Mather, Rev. Colman's sermon-charge and Monis' sermon-response. In addition to these, the volume offered two essays by Monis: *The Whole Truth* and *Nothing But The Truth*. These are basically missionary tracts in which appeal is made to Jews to recognize Christianity as the valid fulfillment of Hebrew teachings to be found in Scriptures and Cabala. Rev. Colman, in his preface to the Monis essays, commends him for his remarkable erudition and mentions the fact that the President and Fellows have appointed Monis to teach Hebrew at Harvard. But he urges that Harvard do more:

I trust that the gracious God may mean Us (I mean the College and these Churches of Christ) great benefit from Mr. Monis his Services, if the Honourable and Reverend Overseers of the College shall think good to confirm the Choice which the Reverend President and Fellows, the present Corporation, have lately made of Mr. Monis to teach the Hebrew Tongue unto the Students; or rather if in their Wisdom they shall see meet to appoint him Hebrew Professor; for which good and great Work we have no Man like-minded, as well as Capable.

2. *Mashkil* was the designation of one who held a secondary rabbinical position, corresponding to that of *Dayyan*. It was an appellation used in Italy, and was considered inferior to the rabbinical title of *Haham*.

Colman's recommendation of Judah Monis for a professorship went unheeded, however, and Monis remained a Hebrew instructor for all of his forty year career at Harvard.

When, in 1722, Monis took up his duties as instructor, he tried, now for the second time, to have his Hebrew Grammar manuscript published by making a printed appeal for public support in the *New England Courant*. In the advertisement describing the projected volume, he indicated that "if a sufficient Number of Subscribers appear, the Work will be forwarded with all convenient Expedition, the Hebrew Type being already arrived from Great Britain." But New Englanders were guarded in their philanthropy. They failed to respond to the appeal and Monis' project continued to remain unrealized. In the meanwhile, Harvard's students of Hebrew had to copy their texts laboriously from Monis' master manuscript. At last, in 1735, Monis prevailed upon Harvard to undertake the publication, and the College Corporation agreed to advance him "a loan with lawful interest" to publish an edition of one thousand copies. At a later time, Monis was given, outright, some fifty copies of the published grammar along with the sum of thirty-five pounds "for his time, care and pains in procuring and perfecting for ye use of ye College an impression of his Hebrew Grammar."

Monis' reasonable success with the grammar apparently whetted his ambition to project another publication. In June, 1735, the *Boston Weekly News Letter* carried an advertisement which read:

A Dissertation upon the 24th & the beginning of the 25 verses of the 49th Chapter of Genesis; with a Historical Narration of the Present Jewish Creed about two Messiahs; by Judah Monis, M. A. Subscription for Printing the same are taken in by Daniel Henchman.

But the advertisement evoked no response and the project remained unrealized.

Fragmentary records of Harvard reveal that Monis had his ups-and-downs during his many years as Hebrew instructor. For example, in 1748, he was requested by the Harvard Corporation to "take more effectual care that the scholars give a more general attendance to his instruction." Having by now been at his task for some twenty-six years, he was apparently slackening in his concern for the class-room attendance of his "scholars." But Monis soon turned the tables on the Corporation by writing them a lengthy letter in which he poured out his frustrations to them. ". . . I would intreat you to Regulate ye Method of Dismissing ye Scholars from Coming," he recommended. If they violated the rules of attendance, Monis thought that students ought to be suspended for their infractions. But why blame the teacher? His load of students was a heavy one, as many as seventy at one time, yet he was "willing to do it, as long as it is for ye Advancement of the Tongue and ye Knowledge of God's Mind." However, let the Corporation get the message across

to Harvard students that their Hebrew studies must be taken with utmost seriousness.

At regular intervals, Monis had to negotiate his salary. His remuneration was meagre, since the Corporation never paid heed to Reverend Colman's recommendation that Monis be named a professor at the time of his conversion in 1722. Thus, in 1753, Monis complained to Harvard authorities that he was earning but eighteen pounds annually. He was forced, therefore, to keep a small shop, selling to the College and its students hinges, nails, pipes and tobacco. In response to his 1753 appeal for an improved salary, Harvard Corporation at last approved an appeal for financial assistance to the Massachusetts Bay House of Representatives, which request was granted. This was not uncommon procedure in that era. The sum of twenty pounds was now granted to Monis by the Legislature "in consideration of his faithful discharge of the Trust reposed in him and for his further encouragement therein." And it must be assumed that Monis was, indeed, encouraged, for he continued to serve as Hebrew instructor until 1760. In that year his wife died. Having served Harvard for nearly four decades and having reached the age of seventy-seven, Monis chose to retire. He died four years later, in April, 1764, and was buried in Westboro, Massachusetts.

The circumstances of Monis' conversion, relating as they do to a Harvard career which was open only to one professing "true Christianity" (i.e., the Congregationalist form), gave rise to doubt even among those favorably disposed to him. Thus, the baptismal exhortation which his sponsor, Reverend Colman, addressed to Monis in Harvard Hall, included these pointed words:

It is easy for you to receive a place in the visible Church and Kingdom of the Messiah, but within it there is an invisible State of Grace; Are you *in That?* . . . Be sure that you have *no By-ends*, no sinister and corrupt *Views*, no *worldly Advantages*, in what you do this day. God forbid that *these* should act you. We hope, we *believe* they don't: You have *solemnly professed* that they do not.

In his preface to Monis' *Discourses*, Increase Mather, the aged venerable who could not be present at Monis' baptism only because of physical debility, came even closer than did Colman. After citing some examples of conversion by Jews to Christianity, among them the report of "two hundred Jews lately converted in the city of Frankford," Mather alludes to other Jews who, having been "converted, or rather perverted, to popery, having after renounced their Christianity." To drive home this point, he speaks of two scandalous instances of defection in European Protestant universities. One case was that of Julius Conrad Otto, originally Naphtali Margoloth, who converted to Christianity and became Professor of Hebrew at Altdorf University, and proceeded to write "violently against the synagogue; nevertheless this man, scandal-

ized at the devotion of his brethren, quitted his profession and returned to Judaism." Mather cites yet a second instance of defection:

There was a Rabbinical Professor at Vienna, who was thought to be Zealous for Christianity, so that he translated Paul's Greek Epistle to the Hebrews into the Hebrew Tongue, who afterwards returned to his Judaism.

Here, Increase Mather focuses sharply on the subject at hand:

Many other examples I might mention, but I will forbear. There is no cause to fear that Mr. Monis will renounce his Christianity, since he did embrace it voluntarily and gradually, and with much consideration, and from Scriptures in the Old Testament.

Mather was obviously warning Monis and attempting, at one and the same time, to allay his personal misgivings with regard to the Jew's sincerity in conversion.

In turn, Monis was constrained to protest his integrity. "My embracing Christianity," he wrote, "was because I was fully persuaded that it is the only Religion wherein I thought I could be saved, and not because I had self ends." But right to his very death-bed Monis was challenged as to his religious constancy. Hannah Adams, in her *History of the Jews*, writes that he was "being attended by several clergymen, to whom he professed his firm belief in the Christian religion." Whereupon one of the clergy observed, "Now, Good Father, you will go to Abraham's bosom." But with his final breath, old Judah Monis protested for the last time, "No, he was but a Jew; I will go to Christ, for he is my only hope." And lest the shadow of doubt extend itself beyond the grave, Monis made provision for his epitaph in the Westboro cemetery to read:

Here lie buried the remains of
 Rabbi Judah Monis, M.A.
 Late Hebrew Instructor,
 At Harvard College in Cambridge,
 In which office he continued forty years,
 But embraced the Christian faith,
 And was publicly baptized,
 At Cambridge, A.D. 1722,
 And departed this life,
 April 25th, 1764
 Aged eighty-one years, two months and twenty-one days.

A native branch of Jacob see,
 Which once from off its olive broke,
 Regrafted from the living tree
 Of the living sap partook.
 From teeming Zion's fertile womb,
 As dewy drops in early morn,
 Or rising bodies from the tomb
 At once be Israel's nation born.

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MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

Review-Essay by THEODORE FRIEDMAN

The Divorce Action by the Wife in Jewish Law (Hebrew). By ZE'EV W. FALK. Institute for Legislative Research and Comparative Law, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Faculty of Law. Jerusalem, 1973. 123 pp.

THE LATE PROF. A. H. FREIMAN CONCLUDED HIS far-ranging historical study of Jewish marriage laws and enactments (*Seder Kiddushin V'Nissuin*, Jerusalem, 1945) with the expression of a devout hope. He urged and hoped that the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and the Rabbinical Courts under its jurisdiction would approach the problems of the Jewish laws of marriage and divorce of our day "with the same flexibility and sensitivity to the needs of the hour and circumstance that characterized the Rabbinic authorities of past generations as evidenced by their interpretations and enactments" (p. 397). Like other writers on the subject, especially those who grappled with the problem of the *agunah*, he explicitly pointed to the loss of Jewish legal autonomy, attendant upon Emancipation, as the root source of the problem. Deprived of the power of enforcing its judgments, the Jewish court found itself powerless to compel a recalcitrant husband, ordered to grant his wife a *get*, to have such a document written and delivered to his wife. It was thought, and hopefully assumed, that with the restoration of Jewish legal autonomy and with the assignment of jurisdiction in matters of marriage and divorce to Rabbinical Courts in the State of Israel, the agonizing problem would at long last find a happy solution, at least in Israel.

The present study, dedicated to the memory of the martyred author of the work mentioned above, reveals, among other things, that such is simply not the case. Even with no civil marriage and divorce possible, and with full jurisdiction in these matters in the hands of the Rabbinical Courts, the problem of the *agunah* is hardly less vexatious in Israel than it is in the *golah*. Accordingly, the seat of the difficulty must be located in the specific nature of the traditional laws of divorce or, more precisely, in the do-nothing conservatism of the Rabbinical Judges (*Dayyanim*) to whom the practical application and interpretation of the law is entrusted. By the specific nature of the halakhah of divorce, we have refer-

THEODORE FRIEDMAN, now living in Jerusalem, was, formerly, Managing Editor of *JUDAISM* and, also, was Chairman of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly.

ence to its provision (*Gittin* 49b) that a *get* is ordinarily to be written only with the express consent of the husband. However, Talmudic Law provides for instances in which the court may coerce the husband to divorce his wife (*Arakhin* 21a; cf. Mishnah *Gittin* 9:8. See Maimonides, *Hilkhot Gerushin* 2:20 for a plausible psychological explanation of how coercion can lead to willing consent). How far a *Bet Din* can go and what methods it can use in bringing pressure upon a recalcitrant husband to give his consent is a subject on which the major *poskim* have a sharp, basic disagreement. In view of this disagreement, the Ḥatam Sofer (Rabbi Moses Sofer, the nineteenth century halakhic authority noted for his arch-conservatism) declared that present-day Rabbinic authorities are forbidden to compel a man to divorce his wife. In this, he is followed by the Rabbinical Courts of Israel, which only in rare and extreme instances seek to compel a man to grant a divorce, a fact borne out by the following revealing statistic quoted in this study.

Of the eighty-eight files of cases in which the wife brought suit for divorce before the Rabbinical Court of Jerusalem (1960), in only 44% of the cases did she succeed in obtaining a *get*. After a careful examination of the proceedings in these cases before the Jerusalem Court, Prof. Falk comes to the conclusion that

It is reasonable to conclude that the Rabbinical Court is disinclined to compel a husband to grant his wife a divorce, though the latter's grounds for seeking such divorce may be completely justified. The Court seeks rather to persuade the woman to obtain the divorce by making financial concessions to the husband, such as waiving her claims for support for herself and her children, claims to which she is legally and morally entitled. The woman is virtually a "captive" of her husband and must buy her freedom or suffer a protracted period of time before she can receive a *get*.

How this works in practice is illustrated by a case which the author cites in some detail (pp. 43-43): A husband abandoned his wife when she was in the final months of pregnancy and decamped for South America. After some years, he was located and agreed to have a *get* written in his name provided the wife waived all claims for support of the child that had been born in the interim. The Rabbinical Court then issued a judgment confirming the agreement worked out between the parties. Despite it, the husband again turned recalcitrant. After two years of negotiations, a new agreement was drawn up. This time, the wife agreed to recognize and accept all gifts she had received from her husband during their marriage in lieu of all future claims for support of the child. The *get* was thereupon issued. Subsequently, the woman brought suit for support of the child in the Civil Courts, which recognized her claim since she had waived such claims only under the threat of not obtaining a *get* from her husband. In other words, the Civil Court refused to recognize an agreement made under threat of blackmail; the *Bet Din* had officially sanctioned such an arrangement.

How far Rabbinic Courts go in applying a double standard is illustrated by the following fact, drawn from a careful study of official court records. A single act of infidelity on the part of the wife is sufficient grounds to win the husband a decree of divorce. (Actually, the decree consists of the judgment that the wife must accept the *get*.) A similar act on the part of the husband, however, is not regarded as sufficient grounds for divorce unless the act was repeated after a warning by the court. In one instance, the court rejected a woman's plea for divorce on the grounds that her husband consorted with prostitutes. While the allegation was not contested by the husband's lawyer, the court based its rejection on the fact that, under the circumstances, the woman refused to have sexual relations with her husband and, therefore, fell in the category of a *moredet*. Further, the court based its rejection of the woman's plea on the Talmudic assumption (*Ketubot* 75a) that "a woman prefers to carry a double burden rather than live alone;" that is, translated in terms of this particular situation, any kind of husband, even one who consorts with prostitutes, is better than no husband at all! Actually, Prof. Falk points out, the possible alternatives were quite other than those assumed by the court. In 1969, there was a significant preponderance of eligible males over eligible women. Hence, the alternative was not a life of loneliness but an excellent chance of remarriage.

From a study of divorce, "Israeli Style," the author turns his attention to a scrutiny of the Rabbinic Courts, their personnel and operation. The only qualification to sit on such courts is expertness in Jewish law and, even here, he reports a number of appointments made without benefit of examination of the appointee's proficiency, thanks to a prevalent nepotism. With no exceptions, the *daiyanim* are innocent of any higher secular education or any real knowledge of Israeli civil law as it relates to family law, inheritance, etc., to say nothing of any expertness in the sociology and psychology of family life. The egregious lapses in its sense of equity are borne out by the following case. After years of marriage, contracted abroad civilly, a husband refused to support his wife on the ground that, according to the halakhah, he was not her legal husband. His contention was upheld by the *Bet Din*. Unlike civil courts everywhere, including Israel, the decisions of the *Bet Din*, in the files examined by the author, consistently fail to state the grounds, the authorities, the precedents and the lines of reasoning on which its decisions are based.

From the foregoing, culled from the volume under review, it is manifest that this study, reflecting as it does the actualities of one specific aspect of Israel's legal system, adds a new dimension to the abundant halakhic material and proposals centering around the problem of the *agunah*. Heretofore, such studies have limited themselves to the elaboration of proposals to obviate the problem and to meeting

possible halakhic objections. Prof. Falk's study, while concluding with a specific proposal—to be described below—takes its rise from a *sitz im leben*, a situation that cries out for a reconstitution of the whole process of divorce in Israel; one that, in effect, would grant the woman the same rights in a suit for divorce as those now enjoyed by the man. In those instances where the wife is entitled to a divorce and the husband refuses to consent, the *get*, according to the author's proposal, would be written and given to the woman by the *Bet Din*. The latter would act in accordance with a specific condition, drawn up prior to the marriage, signed by the groom and duly witnessed. The condition would provide that the marriage terminate either at the death of the husband or at the decision of the *Bet Din* that the woman is entitled to a divorce. If the latter should eventuate, the husband authorizes the *Bet Din* to write and deliver such a *get* on his behalf. Moreover, such authorization by the husband would be irrevocable, having been made under oath and *herem*.

This pre-nuptial agreement would contain a clause stating that the wife was to be entitled to a divorce on the same grounds presently valid if made by the husband.

Halakhists will find the final three chapters of the book, those in which the author establishes the halakhic validity of his proposal, of particular interest. While, in its effect, the proposal is identical with that adopted by the Law Committee of the Rabbinical Assembly (Proceeding of the Rabbinical Assembly, 1968, "*Tnai B'Kiddushin*," cited by the author, pp. 33, 34), Prof. Falk offers an original, far-ranging, closely reasoned underpinning for his proposal. There is, however, one essential distinction between the two proposals that should be pointed out. The *takkanah* of the Rabbinical Assembly provides for an annulment of the marriage in a case where it is impossible to obtain the consent of the husband for the issuance of a *get*. Prof. Falk's proposal entails the writing and delivery of the *get* by the *Bet Din* in such case.

To this reviewer, the latter proposal is to be preferred to the one adopted by the Rabbinical Assembly in 1968. The latter involves the retroactive annulment of an otherwise halakhically valid marriage in a situation in which it is impossible to receive the husband's consent to the writing and delivery of a *get*. The literature of the halakhah attests to the reluctance of the Rabbis to annul a marriage retroactively except in a number of limited specified cases. In addition to the original case of a marriage contracted against the woman's will, the latter *Amoraim* mention only three instances in which the principle of *hafkat kiddushin* (annulment) was applied. All three are invoked in order to reinforce the validity of a *get* which might otherwise be deemed invalid according to Torahitic law (*D'Oraita*). (See *Gittin* 33a; *Ketubot* 3a; *Gittin* 73a.) Personal memory recalls a case in which the late Prof. Louis Ginzberg advised against invoking the principle of *hafkat kiddushin*, even though

the marriage had been annulled civilly on the grounds of bigamy!

Moreover, the dissolution of a marriage through the writing of a *get*, even if by the *Bet Din*, as provided by Prof. Falk's proposal, would contribute to the retention of the institution of the *get* in all cases. The basic difference between the two proposals, or, for that matter, between any proposal stemming from the Diaspora is that in the latter, owing to the existence of civil divorce, there is rarely, if ever, any hearing by the *Bet Din* whether a suit for divorce is justified or not. Once a divorce has been granted civilly, all that remains for the *Bet Din* is to obtain the consent of both parties to the writing and delivery of the *get*. Not so, of course, in Israel where the grounds for divorce, in case of a contest, must be stated and proved in court. For Israel, therefore, Prof. Falk's plan contains a significant advance over the present system that operates overwhelmingly, as illustrated above, to the advantage of the husband. It provides, in the pre-nuptial agreement, that the woman shall have the same grounds for divorce as are presently considered valid if set forth by the husband.

At this juncture, reference ought to be made to the protracted efforts put forth by the late, learned Rabbi Louis Epstein, the man who may be said to have put the question of the *agunah* on the agenda of the Conservative movement by his proposal for an halakhic solution to the problem. The proposal, originally published in book form (*The Agunah Question* [Hebrew], New York, 1930) involved the principle of *minui shlihut* (the appointment of an agent). At the time of marriage, the husband would appoint his wife his legal agent to have a *get* written if he should abandon her, if he should fail to support her for three years, or if she should receive a civil divorce. The proposal was tentatively adopted by the Rabbinical Assembly in 1935. At the time of its adoption, it elicited violent, vituperative protest from Orthodox Rabbinic circles, directed not so much against its substance as against the fact that Conservative rabbis dared to encroach upon an area regarded as the exclusive preserve of the Orthodox Rabbinate. (As a matter of fact, virtually identical proposals had been put forth some time before by a number of Sefardic Rabbis whose Orthodoxy was, of course, unimpeachable.) In response to the wave of protest, the Rabbinical Assembly first postponed putting the plan into operation and then quietly shelved it. The chief objection, rarely if ever voiced at the time, is purely psychological and in no wise halakhic. There is something unpalatable about a procedure which calls for the appointment of an agent for writing a *get* at the time of marriage. In any event, the present practice of the Rabbinical Assembly aimed at avoiding the woeful status of an *agunah* is that described above.

One would have to be either ignorant of the present temper of the Rabbinical authorities of Israel or else invincibly sanguine to hope that

either proposal will be seriously studied, much less adopted, by Israel's *Battei Din*. (In all probability, they will not even be read.) In the meantime, the demand for the institution of civil marriage and divorce in Israel grows apace. Only a last minute tactical maneuver moved the Liberal Party temporarily to shelve its legislative proposal that would make civil marriage available to those for whom the halakhah barred marriage. If civil marriage and divorce should yet come to Israel, its prime movers, albeit unconsciously so, would have been a Rabbinical cast of mind that Bourbon-like forgets nothing and learns nothing. If some crack, however, should appear in the present do-nothing policy, Prof. Falk's study may be credited with initiating the movement. Its candor, its objectivity, and its realistic approach, linked to its skillful employment of the resources of the halakhah, make it a unique study worthy of a careful reading by all those who honestly and openly wrestle with the problem of rendering the halakhah a viable instrument for Jewish living.

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The Truth About David?

The King David Report. By STEFAN HEYM. New York. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1973. 254 pp. \$6.95.

Reviewed by ROBERT GORDIS

THIS book is a striking tour de force. On one level, it is a novel depicting the adventures and tribulations of an ancient Hebrew historian, Ethan Ben Hoshai. Ethan is commissioned by King Solomon to prepare a volume to be entitled *The One and Only True and Authoritative, Historically Correct and Officially Approved Report on the Amazing Rise, God-fearing Life, Heroic Deeds, and Wonderful Achievements of David the Son of Jesse*. On a second level, this biography by an ancient historian is the spiritual autobiography of a writer living in our day, confronted by the agonizing problems of intellectual and moral integrity. On the third and most fundamental level, the book is an effort at the reconstruction of the historical character of David, King of Israel.

Stefan Heym has had an extraordinary career. During the Nazi

era, he fled his native Germany, emigrated to the United States, and served in the American army in World War II. After writing a best-selling novel, *The Crusaders*, he left the United States in the McCarthy period, returning to Germany in 1945. He settled in East Berlin and continued to write in English. In 1969, he was awarded the highest literary prize by East Germany, but a year later was publicly reprimanded by the Communist leader, Eric Honecker. Since then, he has continued to live in Germany, where his work is not being published, and to write in English.

Given this checkered career on both sides of the Iron Curtain, it is no wonder that he has become preoccupied with the question, "What is truth?" and its cynical sequel, "How is it manufactured?" These questions have obsessed writers as different as Luigi Pirandello, Rose Macaulay, and Edward Albee, and continue perpetually to confront students of history. Many of the most articulate historians at work today advocate the view that objective truth is an illusion and

that truths are only reflections of racial, religious or national interests. In other words, there is no truth; all that exists is public relations when the aim is profit, and propaganda when the goal is power.

As a conscientious researcher, Heym's historian, Ethan, begins to gather material on the life of King David by interviewing all of David's contemporaries who survive, and by consulting records and memoranda left by those no longer alive. Beginning with a deep seated skepticism concerning the veracity of all official sources, Ethan-Heym soon arrives at a devastating conclusion about David. He is convinced that, from his earliest years until his death, David was essentially unchanged, self-seeking, ruthless, dishonest, treacherous, a man incapable of love or sorrow. That is not all. He describes David as homosexually involved with King Saul and with his son, Jonathan, whose loyalty he cynically exploits to gain the throne. As king, David is a blood-thirsty despot who establishes his tyranny over his hapless and helpless subjects and prepares the way for the even greater exactions and oppressions of his own son, Solomon.

Ethan finds that all the evidence which he uncovers supports this portrait. He attempts, therefore, to walk the narrow ridge between composing a completely falsified "authorized" biography of his hero, which would violate his conscience, and writing an authentic record of David's career, which would endanger his life. More than once, Ethan teeters on the edge of disaster, as his work is scrutinized by the royal officials and by Solomon himself.

In spite of all of his sacrifices on the altar of discretion, Ethan ultimately fails; his home life is wrecked and his beloved concubine,

Lilith, is taken into Solomon's harem. He, himself, narrowly escapes execution, but is condemned, instead, to spiritual death, being forbidden to communicate his ideas by word of mouth or by writing either to his contemporaries or to posterity.

Heym writes with verve, irony and humor. At least half of his book consists of passages from the Biblical accounts of David in the books of Samuel and Kings. These are reproduced verbatim, but are skillfully chosen and supplemented by Ethan's sardonic commentary.

Heym's technique is fascinating to observe. He has found it easier to paint his portrait of David in vitriol because of a literary practice of ancient writers not yet sufficiently recognized even by scholars. When an ancient chronicler found two contradictory accounts of a given event, he placed them both in his text, one after the other, without trying to resolve the contradiction. In effect, this means that the reader is given first-hand access to the sources! Thus, according to the book of Samuel, David first comes to King Saul's attention when, as a youngster (16:14-23), he is brought to the court to play the harp for the melancholy king. The very next chapter of Samuel describes the famous exploit of David's victory over Goliath. After the battle, Saul asks, "whose son is this lad?" (17:55), and then takes David into his court. Ethan-Heym has no difficulty in explaining the two accounts. He regards the second as an official fabrication in order to glorify David's bravery. Now, it is quite possible that the familiar Goliath-David episode was intended to enhance David's heroic reputation. However, the preservation of the variant tradition makes it less likely that the motive was malicious—especially since II Samuel 21:19 records an explicit tradition

that Goliath was killed by an otherwise unknown hero, Elhanan.

Where no double accounts are available in the sources, Heym supplies his own set of dark deeds and dubious motives for David. This, too, is not too difficult a task, since it is the genius of Biblical historiography not to hide the weaknesses even of its greatest heroes, like Moses and David. Thus, the book of Samuel tells us that when David was a fugitive from King Saul he served as a vassal of the Philistines, though refraining from attacking his own kinsmen. Nevertheless, Heym is certain that during this period David carried out massacres on the members of his own tribe, but that the official chroniclers eliminated this darker aspect of his career. In the tragedy of David's sin with Bathsheba, which involves arranging for her unsuspecting husband, Uriah, to be sent to the front line, so that he is killed by the enemy, the Bible makes no effort to gloss over this heinous double crime. Heym, however, goes further and has Uriah stabbed in the back by his own comrades-in-arms.

Then comes the moving incident in which the Prophet Nathan tells David the parable of the rich man taking the ewe of the poor man in order to feed his guest. When David responds indignantly and orders condign punishment, Nathan responds, "Thou art the man," and David recognizes the enormity of his act. Heym repeats the Biblical account almost word for word, but then he adds, "But the King said, 'I thought there was something surreptitious about your story; now, therefore, tell me: did the Lord truly appear to you, or have you been fibbing?'" (p. 165).

Having lived and worked on both sides of the Iron Curtain, Heym is keenly sensitive to the deep-seated weaknesses in both Communist dictatorship and capi-

talist democracy. In creating the figure of an ancient tyrant and the wide-spread ruin he causes, he is writing an oblique commentary on modern despotism and the corruption it breeds. There is an unmistakable contemporary ring to the passage in which Ethan is commanded to testify against Joab, David's former general, who has fallen from royal grace:

"Who needs a witness!" he repeated angrily. "We have had an abundance of confessions lately! You charge a man with harbouring evil thought: he confesses. With denying the wisdom of the Wisest of Kings: he confesses. The people of Israel no longer doubt the confessions; they merely shrug at them. Where does that leave the law of the Lord and the whole judicial process? That is why the King needs a witness for this trial whose name has not been bandied about in the gates of the cities, a witness with a reputation of wisdom and honesty" (p. 221).

Heym has every right to interpret the sources and conceive of the characters as he sees fit. The Bible has been an inexhaustible quarry for material that creative writers have long utilized in terms of their own special vision. Heym stands in this tradition. Virtually all of the figures that move across Heym's canvas come alive. There is only one major exception—David himself remains curiously unreal. This is probably because he is depicted as a monster of unmitigated wickedness, characterized all of his life by a single-minded, vicious lust for power at all costs.

Thirty years ago, Duff Cooper wrote a full-length biography of David. Cooper followed the basic outline of his career as narrated in the Bible, but enriched it by an imaginative and sympathetic exploration of motives. He describes

the changes in David from his early years as a charming, carefree youth. Then comes his career at Saul's court and as an outlaw, followed by the glory and success of his early years upon the throne. Cooper traces the trajectory of David's life to its apex of agony—his court rent by intrigue, his children destroying one another and seeking to encompass their father's ruin, until he dies, senile, bitter and frustrated. For Duff Cooper, David is a man passionate in his loves and hates, a poet and a warrior, capable of great crimes and deep sorrows—in a word, Everyman raised to the highest potential. The figure that emerges in Duff Cooper's pages—and in the Bible upon which he draws—is not merely more sympathetic, but much more believable.

On the other hand, Heym's David seems too bad to be true. Conceivably, a figure like Heym's David could achieve limitless power—it has been done more than once since his day, as we have learned to our cost. But, we are tempted to ask, could such a character win the limitless love of his people and become the most cherished of Hebrew Kings, the sweet singer of Israel, the ancestor and prototype of the Messiah? Perhaps not, but perhaps yes. We may doubt it, but today we cannot be sure.

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The Future Is Secure

The Future of the Family. Edited by LOUISE KAPP HOWE. New York. Simon and Schuster, 1973. 378 pp. \$8.95.

Reviewed by DAVID M. FELDMAN

THE feminist movement would loom far less threatening to the status quo if marriage and family were not among its revolutionary targets. "Equal pay for equal work"

seems acceptable to all, as do other harmless goals such as the elimination of gross male chauvinism. Yet marriage and the family are very much the object of women's liberation movements; they stand as obstacles to genuine equality.

The early American feminists set their sights on suffrage and, as William O'Neill writes (in *Everyone Was Brave*), they were either married professional women who preferred to concentrate on the issue of the vote, or they were young single women opposed to marriage and family anyway. With the masses of women married or wanting to be, real sexual equality for them could have been achieved only through a "revolution in domestic life." Leaders of the movement were then unwilling to tackle the problems of the family, with the result that a revolution of this kind was not then attempted.

The Women's Movement of our generation has turned to the home front. The collection of essays in the volume at hand—stories, formal studies and personal accounts—is a manifesto of the inequities they see in the family as now constituted. The book's chapters focus on husband, wife, parent, child, home and society, and proclaim why and how that revolution in domestic life must finally be launched.

The present family structure is predicated on a father-breadwinner, mother-homemaker base, which misleads even the analysts. (When Daniel Patrick Moynihan issued his famous government report, he spoke of the black family as "deteriorating," on the ground that about one-fourth of these families had no male at the head.) Such role division not only precludes real equality; it undermines the family itself, according to this book's thesis.

Statistics and studies are marshalled here to the effect that strict

role-differentiation is actually inimical to marital happiness. When the wife does take employment and the husband scales down his career aspirations, chances for happiness are improved. Economically, in fact, the working wife is becoming a necessity if the family income is to reach middle-class status. If the working wife, however, is not an equal breadwinner but a part-time supplementer of funds, and the husband is not an equal homemaker, then we have merely substituted one half-loaf for another. The situation in Russia and Poland is illustrative: the wife is considered a secondary breadwinner, while retaining major responsibility for home and children. The result, there and here, is that she frequently finds herself holding the broom *and* the baby *and* an outside job. Resentment builds and the family is threatened.

The time has come, say the editor and contributors, to reconstitute the family away from its male-breadwinner, mother-homemaker structure. And this, in turn, requires still another revolution; it requires more than a change in the family and its individuals; it calls for a change in the external economy. The job structure and work schedules must be altered to allow for real equality in breadwinning for the mother and father; housing patterns need to be changed to provide for co-operative forms of living; and child care must be provided, and made economically feasible, both within and outside the home.

The personal and social necessity for these changes is argued in the various chapters—necessarily uneven in substance and thrust—of this book. They range from seasoned sociological studies to impressionistic, tedious complaints. Of the former, Prof. Emerita Jessie Bernard is represented by a chapter on

“One Role, Two Roles, Shared Roles,” and Prime Minister Olof Palme of Sweden writes of his country’s efforts at emancipation. In the second category, a liberated Berkeley housewife, who resumed her maiden name as a gesture of assertive feminism, describes her equal-role marriage: she betrays strong resentment that her husband, though he shares 50% of the child-care tasks, still expects her to “do the organizing” of the equal roles in this area. She also “felt jealous” because “he not only had the rewards of parenthood; he was into work he could relate to,” and she nursed their daughter over a longer period “to keep myself as her most special person. It was also difficult to share the one area of competence I felt I had.” Another article, called “The Case against Marriage,” is distinctly inferior in level and quality to the counterpart piece by Betty Rollins—“Motherhood: Who Needs It?” reprinted here from *Look Magazine*. The author’s arguments against marriage under present conditions, include this commercial fact: a single woman, to whom department stores would be delighted to issue a credit card, finds she is denied credit when married to a man temporarily unemployed—since *his* income is the criterion.

“It is time,” the editor therefore says, “to stop debating the future of the family and start creating it.” Her introduction and the contributed pieces are under no illusions about the difficulty of doing so. We are offered, for example, a “Lesson from the Kibbutz: A Cautionary Tale,” by Menahem Gershon, a kibbutznik associated with Israel’s Institute for Kibbutz Education. He speaks of the

deep disillusionment of Kibbutz women who discarded their traditional roles only to find that the

fulfilment they expected did not materialize.

He attributes this to a wrong kind of feminism:

Women's striving was toward identification with men, toward an equality that disregarded sex differences and that set forth male qualities and activities as the model for both sexes.

Mr. Gershon reports that in the present stage of Kibbutz history, when the majority consist of three generations, "family life is once again recognized as a cornerstone of Kibbutz life." The marriage ceremony, at first a private occasion, is now quite a festive affair with hundreds of guests in attendance. There is, moreover, a strong trend toward early marriage (and an increase in the birth rate per family from one-and-a-half to three) which Gershon finds "particularly puzzling," but which indicates, he says, that "when job and family conflict, preference is given to the latter."

Betty Friedan, who wrote *The Feminine Mystique* at the dawn of modern feminism ten years ago, arrived for a visit in Israel recently and told her magazine interviewer there that she would be "preaching to the converted." The Kibbutz movement, she understood, had long ago liberated women, had given them equality and provided the ideal solution for child care. Having spent some time in Israel, however, she found that the egalitarianism she had heard of was formal only, that women kibbutzniks really envied their urban homemaker sisters.

Does the experience of the Kibbutz, then, or, more significantly, does something innate or preferred in sex-role differentiation, fore-

doom the kind of equality this book would have us aspire to? Some of the essays give the impression that a mechanical sameness, a forced levelling, is here mistaken for "equality." Others lose sight of spiritual and personal factors in their emphasis on economics. Still others presuppose two self-indulgent partners insisting more on their rights than on their mutuality.

Overall, however, the book is a fine cumulative statement of a specific problem that feminists—and others—find in the family. As to the family itself, its future is secure; the book, in fact, begins with this quotation from *Up from Under*, a women's liberation magazine:

The one feeling that most clearly came out of our discussions . . . is a sense that in this society the family is shot through with contradictions, that it is perhaps as essential as it is damaging, as much a fulfilment of our needs as it fails them.

Despite the high risk of divorce, the editor concedes, most people, women as well as men, still prefer the satisfaction of family life. (The "roots" Simone Weil believed we all long for, the link to the past and future, the promise of love, stability, etc.) And so, she says,

If the present alternative, as many believe, is either to love the family (and be held back) or leave it (and compete in the male world), then I fear far more for the future of the women's movement than I do for the future of the family.

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The Need for Community

Reform is a Verb: Notes on Reform and Reforming Jews. By LEONARD J. FEIN, ROBERT CHIN, JACK DAUBER, BERNARD REISMAN and HERZL SPIRO. New York. UAHC (Long Range Planning Commission), 1972. 154 pp. \$5.00.

Reviewed by JACK NUSAN PORTER

To me, *Reform is a verb*; it has always stood for the most tolerant, the most liberal, the most socially conscious, and the most flexible of all the Jewish branches. Consequently, I looked forward to reading this report. Maybe my expectations were too high, but, in the end, I was deeply disappointed. No, not disappointed, profoundly saddened.

On a technical level, this is an excellent monograph: well-researched, well-computed, and a fine contribution to social science and to Jewish sociology. Well-written, yes, and extremely well-intentioned. Then, what could be wrong with it?

Before I launch into my critique, let me describe the aim and content of the monograph. This "unique project" began in 1969, when the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, in anticipation of its centennial anniversary (in 1973), appointed a Long Range Planning Committee to "develop an appropriate set of activities to mark the impending celebration." The Committee decided to concentrate its efforts on the future, rather than the past, of Reform Judaism, and to map out innovative programs for the next 100 years. Since "little . . . was known regarding the actual hopes and fears, the beliefs, the concerns, the aspirations of Reform Jews as Jews," a full-scale statistical survey of attitudes and opinions was undertaken. But a survey alone was too passive and "the last thing the

Committee wanted was yet another research report that would be consigned to dusty library shelves," so a series of workshops and "sensitivity sessions" were held and led by senior members of TDR Associates, a consulting firm which specializes in group dynamics and organizational development.

In their preface, Alan Iselin, Alexander M. Schindler, and Leonard J. Fein, maintain that "we were not prepared to assert the actual goals toward which Reform Jews *ought* to strive, (but) . . . to assist people in clarifying their *own* goals, and in developing ways to meet them" (p. viii).

The survey contains few "surprises." As Iselin, in his Report to the UAHC Board of Trustees himself admitted: "In many areas—as was to be expected—these findings give statistical corroboration of our intuitive and observational understandings" (p. ix). For example, he announces that Israel has become the dominant "belief" in the congregants' Jewish lives on a higher scale than Jewish education, temple membership, charity, or even intermarriage. This is a significant change.

The same trend holds true for the youth sample. The Six-Day War had a profound effect on all Jews—Reform notwithstanding.

I'd like to add a "footnote" here. Iselin's synopsis was extremely helpful. I am a trained sociologist and yet I found the survey section (which makes up over 80 percent of the book), with its tens of tables, extremely boring. It was difficult to find the "good parts," e.g., those findings that were a revelation to me.

Iselin's introductory section should be expanded and presented to readers who want the facts in a "nutshell." Perhaps a booklet could be published with his sum-

mary and with Fein's conclusions. This will be helpful to readers who hate pages and pages of tables and statistical charts (and that is *most* people, except some professional social scientists).

There was interesting data on political "backlash," attitudes toward Jewish philanthropies, and intermarriage, especially when comparing youth to adults, but the longing for community is the dominant finding. (More on this later.)

The past decade and a half has seen an attrition of support for liberal and radical causes. Dr. Fein does not see this as a "backlash" but, rather, as a "disillusionment" with the political movements that Jews traditionally supported, like, for example, the Civil Rights movement which turned into the Black Power movement. The 34 percent pro-Nixon vote among Jews was an example of this "disillusionment" with liberal politics.

Here, Fein, et al., find a "mini-generation gap" in their survey. Young Jews are more liberal than are adults. As Iselin notes:

Where the adults want the rabbi to be primarily a good pastor and preacher, and to have good rapport with youth, youth wants the rabbi to be all these, but also to be involved in interfaith activities, and above all to take a stand on issues of social concern (p. x).

This may, in part, explain another interesting finding, this time in the area of philanthropy. While adults would devote 68 percent of their total contribution to Jewish purposes, young Jews would give only 43 percent of theirs to those same purposes. Youth would give more to such non-Jewish activities as the NAACP and the ACLU. Furthermore, the majority of youth respondents in nine of the twelve temples asserted that they would

give *nothing at all* to their local Jewish federation. Of course, these views may change as the kids grow up, but it does say that young Jews seem to care less about money and more about the implications of its use.

The issue of intermarriage will cause even more concern. There is a major gap again between young and old. Whereas 75 percent of the adults hold it essential or desirable to marry within the Jewish faith, only 43 percent of the youth agree. While it must be understood by the reader that an *attitude* on a subject and subsequent *behavior* are not always the same, still, these figures point to increased intermarriage and more tolerance for intermarriage. It's less of a taboo today for youth!

Other findings show that 70 percent of the respondents belong to *no* Jewish organization other than their temple, and, furthermore, that even the temple is not an object of important *emotional* investment for most of its members.

The temple is a place to pray, carry out the *rites de passage* (bar mizvah, weddings, etc.), and to "hang your hat" religiously. The major reasons for this are (a) the temple lacks a sense of community and *havershaft*, and (b) an ideological strain exists within the psyche of American Jews.

Unlike their grandparents, à la *Fiddler on the Roof* (or the German and Sefardic equivalent), who had no "identity crisis" over being Jews, and who lived in an organic Jewish community, many of today's Jews do not know what it means to be Jewish and neither do their children. They have Jewish instincts, but "lack a capacity to deal with Judaism as a serious intellectual inquiry . . . (and) lack (an) adequate opportunity for

Judaism as expressive, even sensory, experience" (p. 144).

There are many other interesting findings, but I would like to go on to the second phase of this survey—the "sensitivity" workshops, which brought Reform members together to discuss their personal feelings, and were, according to the authors, a "gratifying" experience. According to Fein, of the 294 participants, 94 percent had a generally positive evaluation of the program and over one-third found it an "extremely important personal experience."

This comes as no surprise. First, because the temple as an institution rarely asks its members to join in such workshops and to help answer such questions as: Who am I? What am I as a Jew? What would I like to be as a Jew? How can the temple help, or hinder, my search for identity as a Jew? Secondly, because any well-run "sensitivity group" has similar results.

It was a "beautiful experience" for most of the people, but you would never guess it from the few pages of text devoted to it. It's a very short chapter, eight pages long. Then, consider that *eight times* that number (64 pages) are taken up by "cold" statistical tables. There is nary a quotation, a word, an emotional feeling from the respondents. The entire chapter conveys nothing to the reader; it never intimates what a wonderful experience these workshops were.

This brings me to my major critique of the monograph.

It lacks life, tears, joy, communion, exuberance, and *yiddishkeit*. There is not a *single* statement from a youth or an adult that, from the heart, tells it "like it is!" Yet consider that 294 men and women participated in the "sensitivity" workshops, 864 adults and 779

young people took the trouble to fill out and return the questionnaire.

It asked a lot of good questions; it garnered a lot of important demographic background; it verified (or failed to verify) important past research; it involved many fine people; and the result: this monograph is as cold as some (but not all) Reform synagogues I've been in (or for that matter, lest I be accused of bias, some Conservative and even a few Orthodox *shuls*; though the latter tend to be a bit more *gemütlich*).

The monograph, moreover, is badly *dated* in a few ways. It contains not a single mention of the Jewish counterculture—the *Havurot*, the *Fabrengen*, the "unstructured synagogues," and other forms of fellowship. These are not simply theories, but actual on-going "experiments," experiments going on in Boston, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Cleveland—in fact, everywhere that the planning task force lives and breathes. It's impossible to believe that the members of the Pilot Project for Synagogue Change and the Long-Range Planning Committee that sponsored it did not know of these experiments.

The message of this entire report is simply: *we Jews need community!* How do we achieve it in the midst of a highly-mobile, alienating suburbia?

Through all of our work, no single conclusion registers so strongly as our sense that there is, among the people we have come to know, a powerful, perhaps even desperate, longing for community, a longing that is, apparently, not adequately addressed by any of the relevant institutions in most people's lives (p. 140).

Such tortured conclusions. Any sensitive person could have told you that in a minute. Any poet could have summarized this entire, well-wrought 154-page report in a few lines and, in the process, saved the committee a lot of time and money. The report goes on to say how important community is and how difficult it is to achieve and then comes to an astounding and depressing conclusion:

"We do not know whether the answers exist, or what they are; that is hardly our task." (p. 143).

"Hardly our task"? Then, what is the task of a *long-range* committee, if not to think deeply and imaginatively and to come up with exciting and even (may I be bold?) "outrageous" suggestions for building community and bonds of friendship?

Examples exist, as I've mentioned, or adaptations of them exist, all around us: community fellowship groups, *Havurot*, summer camps (for adults and children), outreach programs and Jewish club-houses for high school and college students, various synagogue experiments, etc.

This report cries out for fellowship, yet its conclusions and recommendations are nebulous, cautious, circumspect, and discrete. Young and old alike are psychically "dying" and all we get are excellently composed 2 x 2 statistical tables!

Except for social scientists who need demographic data and attitude surveys for their own research, my suggestion to most readers and to *all* Reform Jews is to buy the book, read the short prefaces at the beginning (pgs. vii to xiv), scan a few tables if you like, read the concluding "A Summary Note" (pgs. 135-152), and put it away on the shelf. Then, call up a few

friends and start your own Friday night Shabbat fellowship.

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The Island That the Rebbe Built

Satmar—An Island in the City. By ISRAEL RUBIN. New York. Quadrangle Books, 1972. 272 pp. \$8.95.

Reviewed by GEORGE KRANZLER

FEW contemporary Jewish groups have drawn as much attention as the Satmar Hasidim, led by Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum, the Satmarer Rebbe or *Rov*, whose community has been located in Williamsburg, a section of Brooklyn, since shortly after World War II. Not only are they among the visually most colorful and distinctive Hasidic groups, but they are among the most militant of all Orthodox Jewish communities anywhere in the world today. The very name of Satmar has become a focus of violent partisanship because of this militancy, particularly since it is the proponent and, frequently, the spokesman for anti-Israel or anti-Zionist elements and activities. Most of the so-called "fanatic" or ultra-Orthodox groups, such as the *Neturei Karto*, the "Guardians of the City" of Meah Shearim in Jerusalem, are closely or loosely aligned with the Satmar Hasidic movement, which is anchored in the court of the Rebbe in Williamsburg.

In Eastern Europe of the twenties and thirties it took courage to denounce all Jewish political organizations as dangerous innovations. And it required a powerful personality to lead the fight against Zionism as a heretic profanization of the traditional concept of Israel as God's nation in exile. To main-

tain this stance now, in view of Israel's pre-eminence as a thriving haven of Jewish survival and of Jewish political and cultural identification, is even more daring, or as his detractors would put it, obnoxious, if not outright treason. The holocaust, the flourishing of Israel and its military triumphs, particularly in the Six Day War, galvanized even the broader masses of the formerly mildly interested, or even the totally unconcerned, into strong pro-Israel partisanship. Hence, Satmar and the Satmarer Rebbe, its official head, have provoked the wrath of the broader masses even among the more moderately Orthodox elements.

Who are these strong-willed "fanatics" that make up the powerful Satmar community in Williamsburg; who defy public opinion and present a self-assured, intransigent stance as a distinctive group of militant Hasidim? Who is this charismatic leader who single-handedly has created and dominated the worldwide community of his Hasidim since the early years of his start in a small town of Eastern Hungary? Why is he beloved, revered, or hated as few other great leaders of contemporary Jewish history? What type of social institution was able to create such a strong, well-organized and fortified "Island in the City," glorying in its isolation?

Professor Rubin deserves credit for his study of Satmar as a functional community, in view of the myth, legend, and wilful distortion, if not outright vilification which it provokes. He presents a rather objective description of the history, ideological background, and factors of faith and inner strength, as well as of the stress and strain that threaten the survival of Satmar in its present makeup. His often fascinating analysis shows the inner texture of this Hasidic com-

munity which, unlike the Lubavitzer movement, for example, does not try to reach out and build bridges into the broader Jewish community. Though not hostile to outsiders, as often alleged, Satmar concentrates on the fortification and expansion of its community from within its own ranks.

Rubin deals little with the interaction between Satmar and the wider community in Williamsburg and beyond, on which it has made a significant impact, particularly in the last decade, in spite of its anti-Zionist stand and the resulting negative image. His focus is primarily on the cultural life, on the traditions and mores transplanted to the American soil and merged into the outer levels of its life style. He deals, in detail, with the stresses which the inconsistencies of such a transplant necessarily produce. Similarly, he treats the various types of challenges that evolve from the concomitant external and internal changes, and the adjustments which they require.

Satmar is at its best when it traces the total power structure, the direct and indirect lines of communication and control which connect the institutions, organizations, and the individual members to the dynamo of the Satmar community, Rabbi Teitelbaum. Professor Rubin highlights the rabbinic, scholarly, sociopolitical and psychological functions which have effected such an amazing degree of loyalty, and, in the author's view, perhaps too much dependency. Only an overwhelmingly charismatic personality could tie the divergent extremist, relatively moderate, and more liberal elements among the Satmar Hasidim into a functional community that reaches from Williamsburg to the far corners of the Orthodox Jewish world. It is this utter respect and reverence which is the most crucial factor of Sat-

mar's inner discipline, more so than the factors of external and internal control, which Rubin emphasizes.

Rubin's *Satmar* climaxes in the analysis of a unique situation which is the source of strength, as well as of an ominous weakness. Unlike most contemporary Hasidic communities, Satmar is solely the product of Rabbi Teitelbaum's dynamic leadership ever since its inception in the small Eastern Hungarian town of Satmar, early in this century. After his older brother's succession to the leadership of the Sziget community of his father, the young scion of two great Hasidic dynasties started his own community. There he served both as *Rov*, the local rabbinic authority, and developed a rapidly spreading movement of Hasidim by virtue of extraordinary piety, scholarship, and religious and sociopolitical leadership. Surviving the terror of the holocaust and its harrowing aftermath of flight, Rabbi Teitelbaum spent a short time in Jerusalem and, in '48, began to rebuild his community and movement in Williamsburg. He has personally initiated and dominated every one of the numerous educational, social, economic, and Jewish political organizations, institutions, and activities of Satmar. No major decision is made without consulting him, from the most far-reaching and worldwide level to the local communal, and down to the personal one of the individual members' lives. Yet, this octogenarian scholar and leader has neither personal heirs nor has he developed any young leaders to step into his place. This is particularly serious since, as the result of a stroke in '68, Rabbi Teitelbaum's personal activities have been considerably curtailed. But his charismatic discipline is so strong that Satmar

Hasidim refuse even to discuss the possibility of a successor.

Rubin points to another threat that also derives from a source of Satmar's greatest strength, its intensive discipline. Interestingly enough, it is even stronger among the members of the younger generation who have been raised in Williamsburg behind the visible and invisible walls of the "Island in the City." They take pride in their wanted otherness in garb and appearance, and their fervent devotion to customs and traditions brooks little compromise in the total observance of the *halakhah* in communal and personal affairs. Intensive Jewish studies from a very early age until shortly before marriage are obligatory, and remain a major leisure time activity of the Hasidim. Marriage at the age of eighteen, or close to it, provides reasonable assurance of the preservation of the highest standard of sexual mores, and a bulwark against the general permissiveness in the broader society. Similarly, one of the highest birth rates in the world (3.95 per female) rapidly expands the size of the community, particularly since most of the ca. 20 couples who marry per week, according to the testimony of one of the officials, seek residence near the Rebbe's court in Williamsburg. The educational institutions cover every range of age and scholarly level among the 5000 students of the boys' and girls' schools and are the most potent guarantee of the perpetuation of Satmar's intensive piety, scholarship, and Hasidism. Only minimal concessions are made to legal requirements for secular education. There is a more liberal attitude in this respect in the curriculum of the girls' school system, particularly in subjects that enable the girls to work as secretaries or as operators in the needle, computer, or diamond trades. Satmar girls and

married women generally go to work as long as they can, before having children, and return to their jobs after the children are of school age. Their earnings supplement the family income, allow young scholars to continue studying for a while after marriage and, generally, support the recent trend towards more of the typical middle-class comforts and luxuries. This greater exposure to the general culture and the temptations of the outside world for women at work, and the narrow range of job opportunities for the men, as a result of their limited education and career perspective, pose a serious threat to the future of the Satmar "Island in the City," according to Rubin.

But highly interesting as Rubin's presentation of Satmar is, it has serious flaws of omission and commission, typical of the flood of recent Ph.D. theses on Jewish topics, which cater to the language and specific interests of their faculty committees. They assume that the reading public of their subsequently published books is totally ignorant of anything Jewish. One can easily overlook such inconsistencies as vacillation in the transcription of Hebrew terms from the scholarly form to the modern Hebrew or the Hungarian Hasidic pronunciation, like *Chimish*. But there is no excuse for treating Satmar Hasidim as if they were some unknown tribe of aborigines, to be explored and presented in the anthropological vernacular of research into mysterious cults, taboos, and customs. It is not only unscientific, but outright offensive, when Rubin discusses Satmar sex taboos, nursing and swaddling practices "to the best of my information," suggesting the inaccessibility of this primitive culture, when all he had to do was to go to the codes of Jewish law or the accepted sources of Hasidic beliefs and customs. Satmar is a highly "cultured"

contemporary Hasidic community, steeped and rooted in the Orthodox Jewish religious tradition. Most of what Rubin discusses as "Satmarer" customs, beliefs, and practices, is part and parcel of the Torah and the rabbinic and Hasidic commentaries. They can be found in any elementary text on Judaism and Jewish communal life in a more comprehensive form. And the little that Rubin has of the actual Hasidic ideology of Satmar can be read in the growing literature on historical and contemporary Hasidism. Delving more deeply into the Zanner and Chasam Sofer background of the Szigeder and Satmarer Hasidic tradition might have produced a more meaningful portrait and key to the unique strength of Satmar.

Equally serious is the fact that Rubin limits himself, as he claims, almost totally to the findings of his research that was completed in '61 and '62. While he does an admirable job of depicting this community and the institutional and organizational web of the movement built by, and around, its revered leader, he fails to deal at any length with the tremendous developments and achievements of Satmar in the past decade. A book published in '72 should provide some insight into the growing strength of this "Island In The City," in its defiance of all known assimilation trends, let alone of popular opinion, in most phases of its social and economic life. Coping with massive welfare problems, dealing with governmental and communal agencies and, above all, displaying a drive for independence, self-help, and mutual support on an unheard-of scale is Satmar's response to the challenges of metropolitan life in the '60s and '70s. Its pattern of indomitable pride and self-assurance has enabled its people to withstand the pressures of the internal and external competition and conflict

which are destroying many Jewish neighborhoods in New York. And, last but not least, Satmar, together with some of the other Hasidic groups, has made a deep impact on Jewish ritual and economic life by the willingness of its members to make supreme sacrifices, financially and otherwise, and by their spirit of enterprise and business acumen.

Rubin's *Satmar* has made a valuable contribution to the understanding of one of the most maligned contemporary Jewish communities. But its anthropological and narrow approach detracts from its merits as a valid sociological presentation of one of the great charismatic leaders of contemporary Jewish history, and of the community and movement which he has built.

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A Detailed Analysis

A History of Modern Jewry: 1780-1815. By RAPHAEL MAHLER. Schocken Books. New York, 1971. 742 pp. \$15.00.

Reviewed by SEFTON TEMKIN

EVEN those who are accustomed to the multi-volumed Jewish histories of Graetz and Dubnow—they cover many centuries—will be startled that the span of a single generation should need a stout volume to record it. Those seven hundred pages, nevertheless, are a mere abridgement of the four volumes of the Hebrew original, and the reader who wonders whether there may possibly have been an over-elaboration of detail would do well to reflect that the learned author probably regards what has emerged as a feat of compression. Even the four volumes are, it would appear, but the first

installment of a more comprehensive history.

Dr. Mahler has long been known as an authority on the Jews of Eastern Europe, and to his latest work he brings the fruits of comprehensive reading in many languages and disciplines and a lifetime of patient research. Thus armed, he deals with the affairs of Jewish communities in widely differing societies during a period of thirty-five years in which their situation radically changed. Though a work of such detail needs unusual literary skill to avoid becoming tedious, it is not so much on account of stylistic shortcomings that some readers may be inclined to treat it with reserve as well as with respect. Dr. Mahler follows a Marxist interpretation of history, but he is also a Zionist, so that at every turn he sees the struggle for a Jewish state in Palestine. *A History of Modern Jewry* is valuable for the information it uncovers concerning conflicts of interest within Jewish communities, matters often overlooked by the more apologetic writers of Jewish history. As to whether the chain of causation is as simple and straightforward and universal, and the division between the "good guys" and the "bad guys" as clear-cut, as seems to Dr. Mahler, others may differ.

Dr. Mahler's capacity to find an attitude revealed in a detail comes out in his interpretation of a couple of points of American Jewish history. Of American Jewry late in the eighteenth century he writes that "It continued to maintain its hope for a normal Jewish way of life, for reunion with the body of the Jewish people" (p. 12). It is not far fetched to imagine that those Jewish settlers in North America who had been uprooted from the traditional life of well-settled communities felt lonely and longed, as did later immigrants, for

the *heim* (*The Uprooted* is the title of a well known study of the situation of the immigrant in America). But one also has the impression that the Jews of eighteenth century America quickly made themselves at home and, at a later period, a feeling of messianic fulfilment in America comes to the surface. Did they feel the need for "national liberation"? Surely the term is anachronistic. In the world of eastern Europe in which Dr. Mahler grew up it was a vivid idea. Does it describe the aspiration of Jewish merchants and artisans in early America? What was the "normal Jewish life" for which they were said to be yearning? It is hardly proved by the survival of prayers for messianic redemption—prayers that were read by rote and little understood. (How many devout Conservative or Orthodox Jews today really look forward to the restoration of the Temple and its sacrifices?) In support of his contention that at this period "the Messianic belief amongst American Jews . . . had become deeply embedded in their consciousness in its political aspects of rebuilding the Jewish state in Palestine" (the equation of nationalism with the messianic belief itself is arguable), Dr. Mahler cites a prayer recited on the termination of the War of Independence which concluded with an expression of the hope for Messianic redemption. Such expressions are a common-form conclusion to special prayers; they are not sure guides to popular feeling. We live in an age when the tide of Jewish nationalism runs powerfully; one gets the impression that the author is led to believe that it ran the same way two centuries ago. He states that "From the middle of the eighteenth century onwards representatives of the communities in the sacred cities of the Holy Land . . . frequently visited

America" (p. 13). The data assembled by Hyman Grinstein in *The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York* (pp. 440, 1) suggest that the contacts were rather infrequent. North America represents only a minor part of the whole canvas, but Dr. Mahler's treatment of it makes one wonder whether his enthusiasms govern his judgment on other matters also.

The treatment is by countries, and questions might be raised as to the apportionment of space. While there is a chapter on the land of Israel, none is devoted to the other countries of the Ottoman Empire. The Rothschilds, significant in regard to social and economic change during the years covered, are hardly mentioned. Dr. Mahler emphasizes the abject condition of the poor and the differentiation between the classes, and it can only be to the good that romantic notions of an idyllic past when rich and poor stood side by side should be corrected. One wonders, however, whether he is not dominated by preconceptions when he states, in regard to Germany, that "The wealthy class . . . made no effort to alleviate the distress of the poor masses" (p. 140). Was there no charity at all? Then he continues ". . . it collaborated with the authorities in implementing all the repressive decrees aimed at these unfortunates." Did the *shtadlanim* and *hofjuden* not even try to help their brethren? What did they seek, and what alternatives were open to them in the absolutist society of the eighteenth century? If they were obsequious before the non-Jewish rulers who could expel them at will, was there any element in society which was not? What claims did they make for their activities, and can they be justified? These questions remain to be answered, even though Dr. Mahler

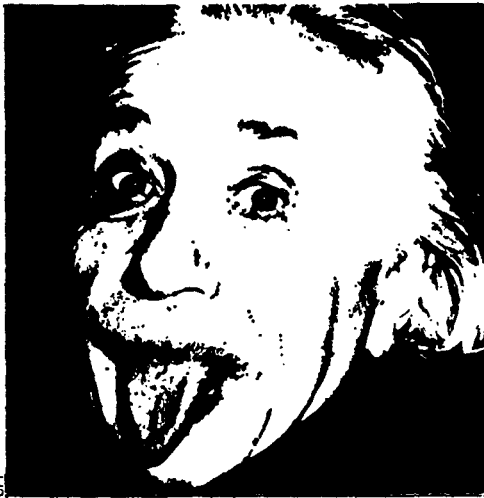
can come forward with facts to satisfy his thesis.

It is not clear whether the translation is the work of the author or of some unnamed collaborator, but the results are not always felicitous. *Pe'rushim* (the transliteration is unusual)—the *mitnagdim* in Safed—are described as “the secluded.” They hardly lived in seclusion, but were “dissenters” or “separatists” from the existing congregation. “The Jewish population [of England] was organized into two separate kehillot, Sephardi and Ashkenazi” (p. 17). The term “kehillot” may convey the idea of an all-embracing community organization such as was characteristic of European localities but which did not develop among the Ashkenazim of England. He refers to the need for “concerted political action concerning the ‘two peoples.’” In the

original English documents the term quoted is “two nations.” Presumably, when he wrote the Hebrew original of this book, Dr. Mahler rendered “nations” as *goyim*, and it has come back “peoples.” By a similar process, “Mordecai Manuel Noah” has become “Mordechai Emmanuel Noah” (p. 14). One assumes that the “J. Wulf” on page 711 is Lucien Wolf. There is an extensive bibliography, but surely it is a major fault in a work of this class that it does not have footnotes giving sources. As this version is the one originally issued by the publishing arm of the London *Jewish Chronicle*, which has adequate editorial resources, such solecisms are less easy to excuse.

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